

University of Oregon Youth Program LGBTQ+ Inclusion Guide

This document has been adapted with permission from 4-H Program Leaders Working Group, Access, Equity, and Belonging committee. The committee created a nationally recognized document for youth program administrators running youth programs in 4-H at Universities across the nation.

The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, **sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression**, this includes all protected characteristics from discrimination under Oregon law, ORS 659A.030.

University sponsored youth programs must ensure that they do not discriminate against individuals (including youth members, adult volunteers, and staff). Any third-party programs run on University property must follow this guidance and the associated Protection of Minors Policy.

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1. What are the differences between sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation?

Sex is a medical term that, generally, refers to a combination of physiological attributes. These attributes include a person's reproductive organs, chromosomes, gonads, hormones, and secondary sex characteristics. Generally, people are assigned male or female sex based upon their anatomical characteristics at birth. It will also be helpful to explain two other terms related to sex: **sex assigned at birth** and **intersex**.

Sex assigned at birth refers to a person's sex designation as recorded on their birth certificate. Generally, a medical professional or guardian designates a newborn either "male" or "female" sex after examining the infant's genitalia.

Intersex is a term that refers to a person who has a combination of male and female physiological attributes. Sometimes people are designated intersex at birth after an examination of genitalia; other times, people are designated intersex later in life.

Gender nonconforming: A person's physical appearance and characteristics or behaviors that do not conform to those typically associated with the person's assigned sex at birth or traditional societal gender expectations. (OAR 416-435-0020)

Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of their own gender. Everyone has a gender identity. A person's gender identity may or may not match their sex assigned at birth. Some common gender identities include: man, woman, gender neutral, transgender man, transgender woman, and gender non-binary. But people may have other gender identities as well. It will also be helpful to explain **in the terms listed below**:

Transgender is a term that refers to a person whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. A **transgender male** refers to a person who identifies as male but was assigned female sex at birth. A **transgender female** refers to a person who identifies as female but was assigned male sex at birth. The term may also be used by those who do not identify within a male/female binary.

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Gender transition refers to a process in which a person asserts the sex that corresponds to their gender identity rather than their sex assigned at birth. A person in gender transition may (or may not) alter their dress/grooming habits, change their name, or use pronouns that are consistent with their gender identity. A person may begin gender transition at any point in their life, and gender transition may happen over a short or extended duration of time.

Gender expression refers to how a person presents their gender to others. This can include how a person dresses, styles their hair, speaks, and many other factors.

Gender fluid refers to a person whose gender identity or gender expression is not fixed. As a result, the person's gender(s) are flexible can change.

Sexual orientation refers to the person or people to whom a person is attracted (emotionally, physically, psychologically or sexually). A person who is a **lesbian** is a woman who is attracted to women. A person who is gay is a man who is attracted to men. A person who is **bisexual** is a person who is attracted to more than one gender or sexual category. A person who is **pansexual** is a person who is attracted to others regardless of sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. A person who is **asexual** is a person who experiences no or little sexual attraction. Although often confused, gender identity and sexual orientation are two distinct aspects of a person's identity.

2. We have individuals who identify as transgender and intersex participating in our youth program this year. How can we ensure these individuals feel comfortable?

It is important for every interested youth to feel welcome to participate in University youth programs. Over the years many transgender and intersex youth have participated in University programming. To answer your question, here are tips to make the University youth programs welcoming, safe, fun and educational for everyone, consistently:

- Do not focus discussions about inclusion on a particular individual as this may be a private matter and may create an unsafe experience for them. Consider keeping the discussion on University practices and policies rather than singling any individual out. The rest of this document will provide more information about inclusion practices.
- Include a copy of the University of Oregon's non-discrimination policy in a welcome packet to new volunteers and families and include a statement that

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all individuals are welcome to participate in University of Oregon youth programs.

- Plan a training for UO staff, volunteers, and/or parents about inclusivity. Be sure that the training includes a discussion about sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, as well as support for ways to answer members' and families' questions. There may be local community resource centers that can provide in-person training.
- Offer individuals who identify as transgender or intersex, an opportunity to meet staff. Discuss options available for sleeping and showering at events. Communicate that the youth program defers to individuals' preferences. (See more below.)
- Learn about preferred names and pronouns and ways to help those in the youth program use those pronouns and names consistently.
- Ask with whom this individual prefers to share a room or cabin. Regardless of sex and gender identity, people are often most comfortable in shared sleeping spaces when they select their own roommates.
- Consider alternatives to segregating or categorizing youth by gender (e.g., please form a boys' line/girls' line).
- Ask an individual if there are any concerns they have about participating. If you aren't sure how to respond to some questions, reassure the individual. Let the person know that you will get more information and get back with a response soon. Then contact the office of Risk Management and Insurance (541) 346- 8316 for help.
- Be sure to check in during and at the end of the program to see how things are going with individuals who have concerns or questions.

3. How should we ask participants about their gender?

Personally identifiable information (including gender identity and sex assigned at birth) should only be disclosed to University of Oregon staff and volunteers that have a legitimate programmatic need for the information. In a lot of cases, there is no legitimate programmatic need to ask participants about their gender identity. For example, if youth are registering to participate in a youth program public speaking event, there is no reason to ask about their gender identity. Likewise, there is no reason to ask volunteers or judges their gender identity.

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In the limited cases when you do have a programmatic need to know, the best option is to ask the following open-ended question: “What is your gender identity?”

If an open-ended question collects too much information to read and process, then consider using the following list as response choices to the question:

“What is your gender identity? / What best describes your sex/gender identity?”

Female

Male

X

Transgender

Gender Identity Not Listed Above

Prefer Not to State

4. How do we verify that an individual is intersex or transgender?

Verification is neither necessary nor appropriate. Youth Program participation does not require a medical diagnosis, treatment, or identification documentation that reflects an individual’s gender identity. Individuals are not required to notify the University that they are transgender or intersex. Electing not to inform the University is perfectly fine.

5. Our overnight youth program event or camp has a girls’ section and a boys’ section. Where should people who identify as transgender or intersex sleep, use the restroom, and shower?

When there are gender segregated facilities and/or activities, individuals who identify as transgender or intersex must be allowed to sleep, use the restroom, shower, and participate in alignment with their gender identity. Some individuals who are early in the stages of gender transition may feel more comfortable participating in alignment with their sex assigned at birth, which is okay too. Do not require an individual to use single-user facilities (sleeping, restroom, or shower) unless the other participants are also required to do so. A single-user facility or other private option should be made available to anyone who requests it. Some ways to offer private options include using dividers, hanging curtains, or arranging private bathing/showering times.

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6. Our overnight youth program event or camp has co-ed facilities. Where should people who identify as transgender or intersex sleep, use the restroom, and shower?

In a co-ed facility, people who identify as transgender or intersex should use the common sleeping, restroom, and shower facilities in the same manner as the rest of the youth program participants. Do not require an individual to use single-user facilities (sleeping, restroom, or shower) unless the other individuals are also required to do so. A single-user facility or other private option should be made available to anyone who requests it. Some suggestions for providing private options include using dividers, hanging curtains, or arranging private bathing/showering times.

7. We have group showers. Where should people who identify as transgender or intersex shower?

All youth program participants must be treated in the same manner. If group showers and group changing spaces are used at the youth event or camp, then everyone should be permitted to use them according to their gender identity. At the same time, many people feel more comfortable showering and changing in private, so it is a best practice to offer participants the option of privacy at all youth events and camps. Some youth programs have installed curtains in group showers and partitions in changing areas for all participants' privacy. Another strategy is to offer signups for private shower times throughout the day. The key is to make these options available to all participants, not just those who identify as transgender or intersex.

8. Should adult chaperones supervise youth during showering and changing times?

Adult chaperones should remain within hearing distance of youth members during showering and changing times. At no time should an adult visually supervise youth during showering and changing clothes.

9. Can we notify youth members and/or parents of other youth members that a transgender or intersex individual will be participating in our youth program event, activity, or camp?

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No. Protecting transgender and intersex individuals' privacy is critical to maintain safety and well-being, ensuring that individuals are treated consistent with their gender identity, and preventing potential harm. The same is true for sexual orientation. At the same time, inform all parents and youth members about the inclusive environment and non-discrimination policies. If parents or youth are uncomfortable with these policies, they may choose to limit their own participation.

10. Can we notify youth program staff and volunteers that a transgender or intersex member will be participating in a youth program, event, activity, or camp?

Only in very limited situations. This information may only be disclosed to those University of Oregon staff and volunteers that have a legitimate programmatic need for the information. For example, a University of Oregon staff and/or volunteer may need to know in order to ensure a specific request by the individual is fulfilled. A participant simply identifying as transgender does not constitute a legitimate programmatic need. University of Oregon staff and volunteers who do not have a programmatic need, should not be informed. Even if an individual has disclosed their gender identity to some members of the University community, the University of Oregon shall not disclose this information to others. The same is true for sexual orientation. At the same time, you should arrange inclusivity training for University of Oregon staff and volunteers and create opportunities to discuss how to implement non-discrimination policies. These discussions and trainings will help prepare staff and volunteers to address questions, concerns, harassment, or bullying that may occur.

11. We have a youth member who identifies as transgender; however, the member's parents are not supportive of their child's gender identity. What should we do?

The University of Oregon will treat members who identify as transgender according to their gender identity even in circumstances in which the youth's guardian raises objections or concerns. While the youth participates, the University of Oregon program will not discriminate.

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12. A youth (or parents/guardians) contacted us to say they do not want to share sleeping accommodations with someone who identifies as transgender. How do we respond?

Please inform the individual that you are required to follow the federal and state non-discrimination policies. According to these policies, no information about an individual's gender identity is collected. Additionally, university action in support of a youth who wishes to discriminate, by limiting the options of youth who identify as transgender, may in itself be discriminatory. While youth (or their parents/guardians) may choose to not participate in the youth program event/camp, the University of Oregon program will not allow discrimination against any individual, despite objections or concerns. Additionally, you may provide the contact information of the University of Oregon's Office of Civil Rights and Compliance if someone continues to raise objections to the non-discrimination policy: (541) 346-3123.

13. We have received a report that an individual is being harassed because of her sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. How should we respond?

Whether this report comes directly from the individual, someone else, or direct observation, a thorough response is required. All University of Oregon youth programs must provide a safe environment free of harassment based on an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. A single offensive comment should be discussed, and you should review your youth programs code of conduct, as well as the University of Oregon's non-discrimination policies. Failing to treat individuals consistent with their gender identity, including using their preferred names and pronouns, may constitute harassment. If harassment continues, you should immediately stop the harassment, prevent the reoccurrence, and engage in appropriate corrective action.

In all cases, take steps to ensure the individual who experienced the conduct is secure and safe, and check in with them regularly to make sure the behavior has stopped.

The university is committed to equal access to programs, course offerings, facilities, admission and employment for all of its employees, students, and campus community members. It is the policy of the university to maintain an environment free of harassment and discrimination against any person. For more information on how to report harassment

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and discrimination go to: <https://investigations.uoregon.edu/reporting> or phone: 541-346-3123.

14. Someone wants to file a complaint in regard to this policy. What should I do?

Please direct complaints to the University of Oregon's Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance.; oiarc@uoregon.edu; 541-346-3123.

15. Where can I locate the University's policy on discrimination and harassment?

The University's policy Prohibited Discrimination and Retaliation applies to all students, staff, faculty, university partners, and other individuals participating in or seeking to participate in, or benefit from, the university's programs or activities, whether on or off campus, including education and employment. The policy is located online: <https://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-5-human-resources/ch-11-human-resources-other/prohibited-discrimination-and-retaliation>

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