

MODULE 2

GENDER IDENTITY

Exercise 1: Terms 101 + Pronouns 101

15 MINUTES

Goal: To gain a beginning understanding of the diversity of the “lgbtqqi2a community” and the words most often used to describe members of this community in terms of gender identity

Note: Language is fluid. Definitions and understandings of words change across time and place. Always allow people to choose the words they use to describe themselves. The glossary at the back of this resources includes additional terms as well as more detailed descriptions of the words below.

For experienced groups: If you think you’ve already got the terms down, cover up the page below and work as a group to name the words and basic descriptions encapsulated in “lgbtqqi2a.”

For all other groups: As a large group, match the terms and descriptions below. See the glossary for more detailed descriptions. Take a few moments to clarify any questions, but don’t spend too much time on this exercise. Accept that these are the basic understandings of how these words are used in this resource, and commit to doing more reading and learning another day.

TERMS 101

MATCHING TERMS	MOST OFTEN DESCRIBES...
THEY	a. A person who does not identify with the gender and/or sex assigned to them at birth, either wholly or partially.
FAAB/MAAB	b. A person who identifies with the gender and/or sex assigned to them at birth.
TRANSITION	c. A woman who was assigned male at birth. Sometimes the acronym MTF (male-to-female) is used to describe them.
INTERSEX	d. A man who was assigned female at birth. Sometimes the acronym FTM (female-to-male) is used to describe them.
TWO-SPIRIT	e. An identity taken on by a variety of people who feel that, in some way, the very substance of their genders lies outside the gender binary's two labels of "male" and "female."
CISGENDER	f. An umbrella term covering any gender identity that doesn't fit within the gender binary. The label may also be used by individuals wishing to identify as falling outside of the gender binary without being any more specific about the nature of their gender.
TRANS WOMAN	g. A gender identity which refers to a gender which varies over time.
GENDERQUEER	h. The external manifestation of one’s gender identity, usually through ‘masculine,’ ‘feminine,’ or gender-variant behavior, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics.
ASSIGNED SEX	i. One’s innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither.

NON-BINARY	j. A term used by psychologists and physicians to describe people who experience significant dysphoria (distress) with the sex and gender they were assigned at birth.”
MISGENDER	k. Female assigned at birth/male assigned at birth
TRANS MAN	l. The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender, with its outward appearance. Some people might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others modify their bodies through medical interventions.
GENDER FLUID	m. A term used by some indigenous North Americans to describe gender-variant individuals in their communities.
GENDER EXPRESSION	n. A gender-neutral pronoun
GENDER IDENTITY	o. The experience of being labeled by someone as having a gender other than the one you identify with.
GENDER DYSPHORIA	p. A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
TRANSGENDER	q. A way to refer to the sex that was put on your birth certificate without making assumptions about your actual/current sex, body or identity.

PRONOUNS 101

In pairs, complete the following sentences with a gender-neutral or non-binary third person pronoun. See the Gender Neutral and Non-binary pronouns table below for a list of pronouns.

_____ go/goes to the park every day.

I gave the keys to _____

_____ books are on the table.

Are these books _____?

Taylor looked at _____ in the mirror.

SUBJECT	OBJECT	POSSESSIVE ADJ.	POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	REFLEXIVE
e/ey	em	eir	eirs	eirself
[name]	[name]	[name]'s	[name]'s	[name]'s self
per	per	pers	pers	perself
they	them	their	theirs	themselves

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ze	hir	hir	hirs	hirsself
ze	zir	zir	zirs	zirsself
xe	xem	xyr	xrys	xryself

Try and get into the practice of using "they" or another gender neutral pronoun when referring to those whose gender you do not know. Practice sentences using gender-neutral and non-binary pronouns on your own, either in writing or speech. Ask each new person you meet what pronouns honor them. If you slip up occasionally, apologize and correct yourself. Do not refer to someone with the pronoun "it" unless they explicitly say to refer to them that way.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT SINGULAR THEY

The pronoun "they" came into English in 1200 from a Scandinavian source, from Old Norse *þeir*, Old Danish and Old Swedish *þer*, *þair*. It was originally a masculine plural demonstrative noun, from Proto-Germanic **thai*, and from Proto-Indo-European **to-*. In Old English, it replaced pronouns *hi*, *hie* and plural *he*, *heo*, *she*, *it* by the fifteenth century. The colloquial use meaning "anonymous people in authority" is recorded from 1886 or 1852. The Oxford English Dictionary record the use of *they* as "the subjective case of the third person plural pronoun of undetermined gender: *he* or *she*" from 1375. It also states that this use has "sometimes been considered erroneous."

The use of singular *they* has been criticized since at least the nineteenth century. It has risen in use since the "use of masculine generic nouns and pronouns in written and spoken language have decreased since the 1960s." In 2002, a study examining American and British newspapers found a preference for *they* to be used as a singular epicene pronoun. Modern style guides are varied in their approach to *they* being used as a singular epicene pronoun. The fourteenth edition (1993) of the *Chicago Manual of Style* "explicitly recommended use of singular use of *they* and *their*, noting a 'revival' of this usage and citing 'its venerable use by such writers as Addison, Austen, Chesterfield, Fielding, Ruskin, Scott and Shakespeare.'" However, from the fifteenth edition to the current edition, this was changed. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, *The Elements of Style* and the Purdue Online Writing Lab explicitly reject use of singular *they*. *Garner's Modern American Usage* (2003) advises cautious use and the *American Heritage Book of English Usage* recommends avoiding using singular *they* "out of respect for a 'traditional' grammatical rule."

Since at least the fifteenth century, *they*, *them*, *their*, *theirs* and *themselves* or *themselves* have been used as singular pronouns. In Britain, Australia and North America, singular *they* is widely used in conversation. Some linguists trace the criticism of singular *they* as grammatically incorrect to the sixteenth century, "when English grammar began to be a subject of study, some rules of Latin grammar were applied to English; and...the Latin-based rules of grammatical agreement might have been seen as forbidding the English singular 'their' construction." Later, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, prescriptive grammarians started to criticize the singular use of *they*, because it did not accord with the logic of Latin.

The use of singular *they* has been accompanied by proposals for nonstandard pronouns, which arose in the nineteenth century, if not previously. Charles Crozat Converse proposed "thon" in 1884, where it was picked up by *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary* in 1898 and remained there as recently as 1964 and was included in *Webster's Second New International Dictionary*.

Today, singular *they* is used as a gender neutral pronoun, as an alternative to the binary pronouns *he/him/his* and *she/her/hers*. Many people under the genderqueer and transgender umbrellas use singular *they*. In 2015, the American Dialect Society, "voted for *they* used as a gender-neutral singular pronoun as the Word of the Year."

Exercise 2: Increasing Understanding

10 MINUTES

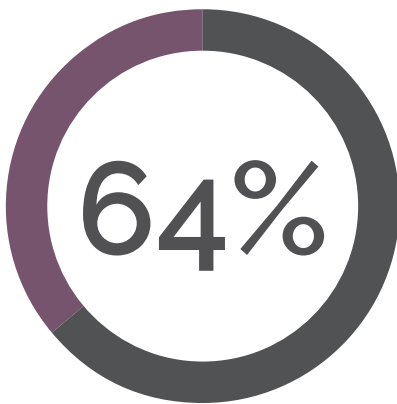
Goal: To increase understanding of what it is like to be lgbtq given factors in the current environment. There are many “bad news” statistics about lgbtq people, including lgbtq youth, related to depression, substance abuse, homelessness, etc. It is important to remember that being lgbtq does not “cause” any of these things, but that lgbtq people may be at higher risk due to experiences of marginalization and discrimination.

Since most Safe Zone workshop participants are likely thinking about lgbtq youth and young adults, it is appropriate to start with an understanding of the school environment as experienced by many lgbtq people. One can assume that those who are some decades from a school environment likely had worse experiences.

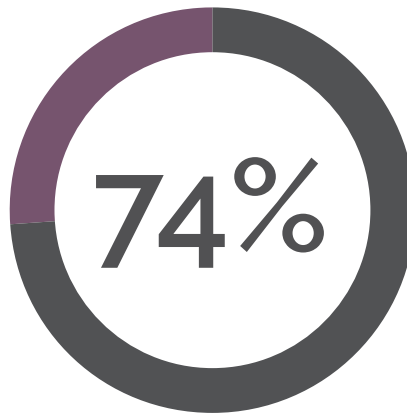
Take a moment or two to allow people to read through some of the following statistics.

Have each individual pick / write down two points to keep in mind as the group continues with the discussion of myths and facts.

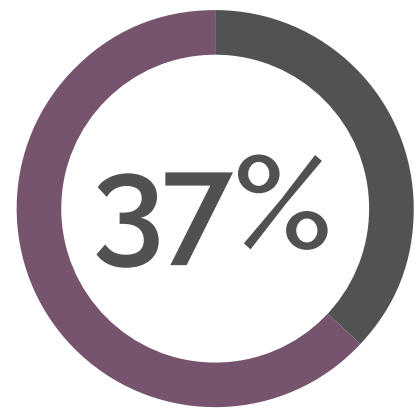
NATIONAL CLIMATE SURVEY IN CANADIAN SCHOOLS



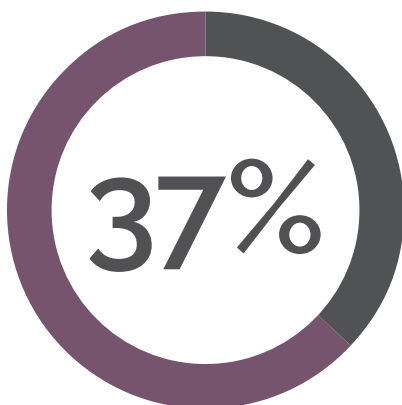
of lgbtq students reported that they felt unsafe at school



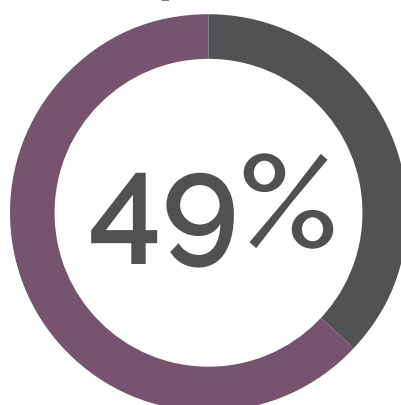
of trans students reported verbal harassment due to gender expression



of trans students reported verbal harassment due to sexual orientation



of trans students reported physical harassment or assault due to gender expression

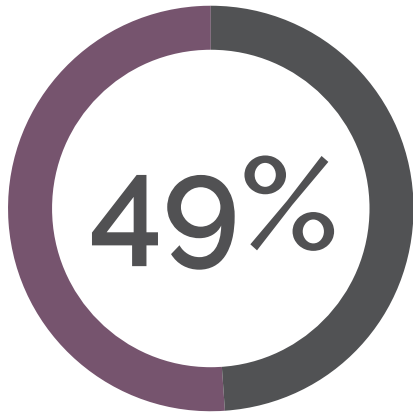


of trans students experienced sexual harassment in school in 2010

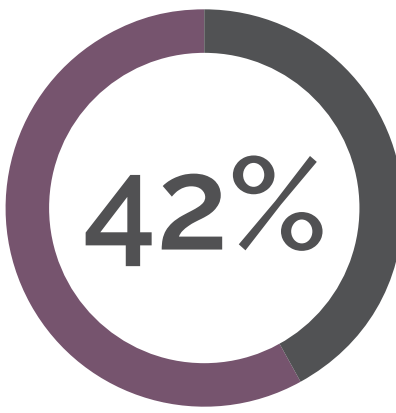
Many of the statistics in this survey included an important piece of intersectionality: that many trans students were harassed or assaulted due to both gender expression and sexual orientation.

Statistics from the Final Report on the First National Climate Survey on Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools

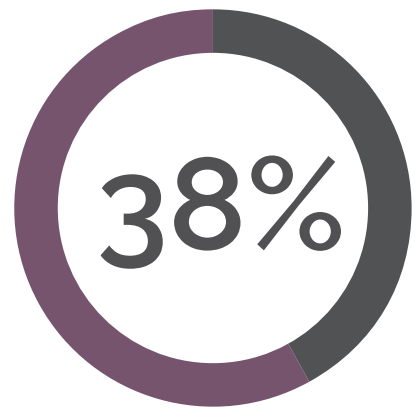
2013 NATIONAL CLIMATE SURVEY- UNITED STATES



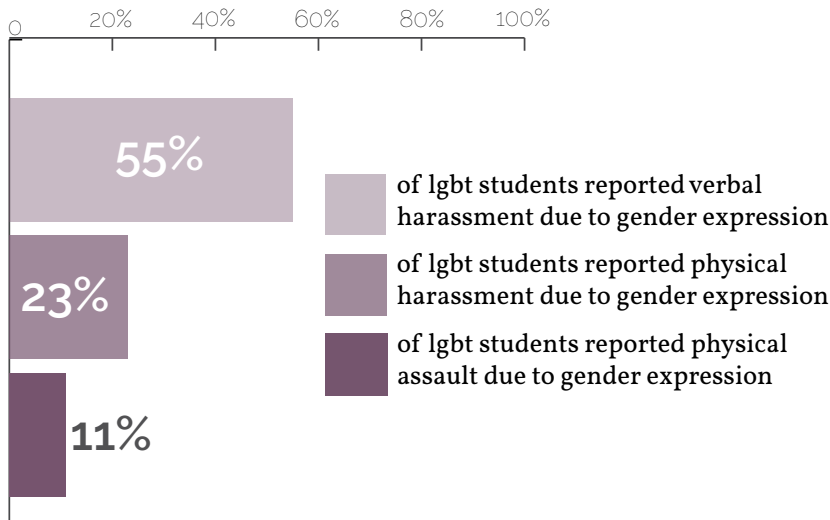
of LGBT students reported electronic harassment



of trans students were prevented from using their preferred name



of LGBT students felt unsafe at school due to their gender expression

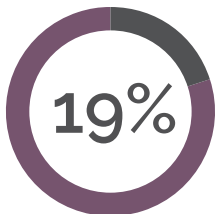


Unlike the Canadian survey, this GLSEN survey did not specifically ask LGBT students to identify themselves as trans or cisgender. As a result, statistics about gender expression were chosen for the purpose of this manual.

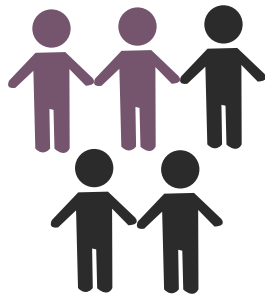
Statistics from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) 2013 National School Climate Survey

OTHER IMPORTANT STATISTICS

32 states do not have state-wide non-discrimination laws that cover gender identity¹



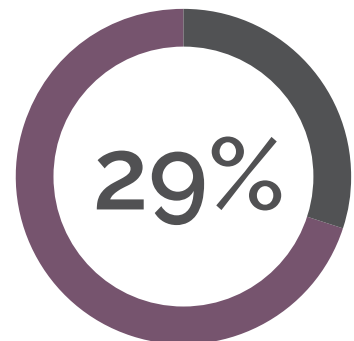
of transgender people have experienced violence or abuse from a family member²



2 in 5 transgender people have attempted suicide. Sexual assault was the biggest cause, followed by physical assault, harassment in school, and job loss due to bias.³

transgender people are **four times** more likely to have a yearly household income of less than

\$10,000 compared to the general population⁴



of transgender and gender non-conforming people reported being harassed or treated disrespectfully by police officers; the rates are even higher for trans people of color⁵

DISCUSSING MYTHS AND FACTS

We live in a world that is full of myths and inaccurate information about lgbtq people. No one is immune to the effect of living amongst these beliefs, no matter what our sexual orientation or gender identity is.

Read through the myths and facts below, either individually or in a group. Keeping a few of the statistics in mind, discuss responses to the following questions:

1. Have you heard some of these myths before; are there any other common myths you have heard?
2. How does living in an environment where these myths persist affect an lgbtq person?
3. How do they affect a straight or cisgender person?
4. How can you become aware of myths that you have learned as facts?
5. How can you correct myths when you hear them repeated?

All transgender people are gay or lesbian | There is no direct correlation between gender identity and sexual orientation. Transgender people may identify as gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or heterosexual.

Being LGBTQ is a mental disorder | In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed "homosexuality" from the list of mental disorders. "Gender dysphoria" remains on the list, though many advocate for its removal. However, if removed, health insurance companies will not cover hormone treatment and/or surgery for transgender people who seek these options.

The sex assigned to a person at birth is their "real" sex or gender | Sex is assigned at birth on the basis of a cursory look at the infant's genitals. In about 1% of births, there is some ambiguity in the external sex organs and mistakes can be made. There can also be inconsistencies between a person's internal reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, external sex organs or secondary sex characteristics.

Transgender people live "crazy" lives | TV and media often portray transgender people doing drag performances, drugs and prostitution and as having hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine behavior. These portrayals are an incomplete, stereotypical view of transgender people. Trans people do "every day" things like cisgender people do.

All trans people have surgeries and go on hormones | Some transgender people go on hormones and have surgeries to more closely align their sense of self with their physical body, but many transgender people do not and are comfortable with their body without altering it.

All transgender people perform drag shows | Many of the people who participate in drag shows are cisgender. "Drag Queens and Drag Kings 'do drag' for theatrical, comedic, and at times, political purposes. When a trans woman wears women's clothing or a trans man wears men's clothing, they are not doing drag. Nor are they cross-dressing. They are just wearing their clothes."

All trans men are very masculine, all trans women are very feminine, all genderqueer people are androgynous | Transgender people have a wide variety of gender expressions, just as cisgender people do. Trans women can be masculine, trans men can be feminine.

Genderqueer and non-binary identities aren't "real" | Genderqueer people do experience their identities as very real. Many of them are in quite a difficult position; while they live in a society that is profoundly two-gendered, that system just doesn't work in their cases.

Modified from: <http://transwhat.org/debunked/> and <http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/08/myths-about-transgender-people/>

Exercise 3: Understanding Transphobia

15 MINUTES

Goal: To increase understanding of the way transphobia operates in our lives on a personal and interpersonal level.

Before reading and discussing the personal assessment, we need to define what transphobia is in general terms.

The term "**transphobia**" was first recorded in 1993, defined as "fear or hatred of transsexual or transgender people." Like homophobia and biphobia, the term is used to describe oppression against transgender people and the cultural hatred of transgender people as a social group as well as individuals. The term is often used to describe cultural attitudes about transgender people where cissexism is used to describe institutional oppression against transgender people.

Now, read through the personal assessment list and discuss in small groups what else you think could be added to this list and your responses to the questions. Be honest about your experiences, socialization and thoughts about each question. Discuss the ways you can change your patterns of thinking and actions so that you do not perpetuate transphobia.

Note: This list is meant to incite conversation about personal and interpersonal transphobia, rather than looking at the larger societal consequences and structures that have created these ideas and stereotypes. In Exercises 4 and 5, we will discuss those consequences and cissexism.

TRANSPHOBIA PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

- ◆ Have you used "real," "biological" or another similar term to describe the gender of a cisgender/non-transgender person?
- ◆ Have you repeatedly used the wrong pronoun for someone after they told you their preferred pronoun?
- ◆ Have you refused to use the correct (chosen) name for a transgender person?
- ◆ Have you asked invasive questions about sex, transitioning and/or genitalia after learning that someone is transgender?
- ◆ Have you made jokes or derogatory comments about someone you suspect is transgender?
- ◆ Have you asked for a transgender person's "real" (i.e. birth or given) name?
- ◆ Would you date a transgender person?
- ◆ Have you assumed that you can always identify someone who is transgender?
- ◆ Have you learned or thought that being transgender is a mental illness?

- ◆ Have you felt disgusted by or uncomfortable with transgender people?
- ◆ Have you dismissed a transgender person's gender identity as a fad or phase?
- ◆ Have you assumed that those who cross-dress do so for sexual gratification?
- ◆ Have you used an anti-trans slur or derogatory term to insult, invalidate or intimidate a transgender person (or someone you suspect is transgender)?
- ◆ Have you made fun of people for "making up" their gender identity?
- ◆ Have you expressed concern about a trans person interacting with children?
- ◆ Have you made a comment like "I would have never known" after learning that someone is transgender?
- ◆ Have you outed (revealed to someone who did not previously know) a transgender person without their consent?
- ◆ Do you consume any pornography or media that fetishizes and objectifies transgender people?
- ◆ Have you believed or do you believe that gender affirmation (or reassignment) is a "mutilation" of the body?
- ◆ Have you assumed that all trans women are sex workers?
- ◆ Have you policed or made comments about the gender expression of a trans person? This can include telling a trans person that if they wanted to be perceived as a "real" girl or boy, they need to dress or behave in a particular way.
- ◆ Have you thought that there is a universal transgender experience?
- ◆ Have you endorsed gender normative or binary culture or behaviors?
- ◆ Have you used phrases such as "both genders," "opposite sex or gender?"
- ◆ Have you conflated definitions of sex and gender by defining gender based on a person's genitalia? (i.e. all women are female assigned at birth and all men are male assigned at birth)

Exercise 4: Understanding Cissexism

15 MINUTES

Goal: To acquire or develop an understanding of cisgender privilege, including how it operates in your life.

Before discussing cisgender privilege and assessing the way it functions at your specific institution, take a look at where the term cissexism comes from:

Cissexism is often used as the term to describe institutional practices and policies that oppress trans people, while transphobia describes societal attitudes towards trans people. The related term "cissexual privilege" was coined by Julia Serano in her 2007 book, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*.¹ Prior to that, the term "cisgender privilege" appeared in academic literature. Serano and other sources define the term as, "the set of unearned advantages that individuals who identify with their biological sex accrue solely due to having a cisgender identity."

Prejudice against transgender people + power = cissexism

Cissexism is institutionalized through the normalizing of cisgender identities at the expense of transgender and non-binary identities. Cissexism can be easily seen in gendered bathrooms and housing. Another important facet of cissexism is the lack of representation of out or open transgender people in the media, politics and other parts of public life. Cissexism produces cisgender privilege.

PROBING CISGENDER PRIVILEGE

A person who is cisgender identifies with the same gender that they were assigned at birth. In other words, a person who is not transgender.

Similarly to privilege described in Module 1: Exercise 4, cisgender privilege is the combination of unearned advantages cisgender people possess in our current society, whether or not the privilege is conscious or desired. The Cisgender Privilege List gives some examples.

If you do not have cisgender privilege, some of the questions in this exercise may not apply to you—participate where and how it makes sense.

For most groups:

In the large group, have people take turns reading the Cisgender Privilege List. Reflect on and discuss the following questions:

1. What is your initial reaction to hearing this list?
2. In your head, pick three that either impact your daily life or have an all-encompassing effect. What does it feel like to have these advantages? What might it feel like not to?
3. Are there other things you would add to the list?

For experienced groups:

If the group already has a grounding in recognizing and understanding privilege, address the following:

1. Brainstorm some cisgender privileges that could be put in the category of rights everyone should have, and some that are about having power over others. (For context, see Peggy McIntosh's article *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*.)
2. What does it feel like to have these privileges?
3. What are ways or situations where you can give up, not claim, or risk your privilege.

Cisgender Privilege Checklist

1. Strangers don't assume they can ask me what my genitals look like and how I have sex.
2. My validity as a man/woman/human is not based upon how much surgery I've had or how well I "pass" as a cisgender person.
3. I am not excluded from events which are either explicitly or de facto men-born-men or women-born-women only.
4. My politics are not questioned based on the choices I make with regard to my body.
5. I don't have to hear "So have you had THE surgery?" or "Oh, so you're REALLY a (incorrect sex or gender)?" each time I come out to someone.
6. I am not expected to constantly defend my medical decisions.
7. Strangers do not ask me what my "real name" (birth name) is and then assume that they have a right to call me by that name.
8. People do not disrespect me by using incorrect pronouns even after they've been corrected.
9. I do not have to worry that someone wants to be my friend or have sex with me in order to prove his or her "hipness" or "good" politics.
10. I do not have to worry about whether I will be able to find a safe and accessible bathroom or locker room to use.
11. I do not have to defend my right to be a part of "queer" space or movement, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people will not try to exclude me from our movements in order to gain political legitimacy for themselves.
12. I do not have to choose between either invisibility ("passing") or being consistently "othered" and/or tokenized based on my gender.
13. I am not told that my sexual orientation and gender identity are mutually exclusive.
14. When I go to the gym or a public pool, I can use the showers.
15. If I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment nor will all of my medical issues be seen as a product of my gender. ("Your nose is running and your throat hurts? Must be due to the hormones!")
16. My health insurance provider (or public health system) does not specifically exclude me from receiving benefits or treatments available to others because of my gender.
17. When I express my internal identities in my daily life, I am not considered "mentally ill" by the medical establishment.
18. I am not required to undergo extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.
19. The medical establishment does not serve as a "gatekeeper" which disallows self-determination of what happens to my body.
20. People do not use me as a scapegoat for their own unresolved gender issues.
21. My religious faith is not questioned because of my gender identity.
22. -----
23. -----

There are many similar lists based on Peggy McIntosh's *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*. This list, with minor editing, is from the Multicultural Resource Center at Oberlin College (www.oberlin.edu/mrc/Workshops.Trainings/trans_trainings/CisgenderPrivilegeList.pdf)

Exercise 5: Trans-Specific Needs

15 MINUTES

Goal: To increase understanding in what transgender people need from institutions. To make a summary assessment of the culture, policies and practices at your institution that relate to transgender welcome.

The needs of transgender people often coincide with gay, lesbian and bisexual people, but there are many needs that are specific to transgender people that do not affect cisgender gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

In groups of 4-5, make a list of examples that fall under each category. For each example, note whether or not your institution addresses this need. Some categories may overlap, so feel free to put an example in more than one place. One example for each category has been supplied to get you started. You can also refer to Exercise 4 in Module 1 for ideas.

CATEGORIES	EXAMPLES
POLICIES	Non-discrimination policy that includes “gender identity” and not just sexual orientation.
ACCESS	Gender-neutral bathrooms in most, if not all, facilities.
TRANSITIONING	Access to healthcare related to transitioning, including hormone replacement therapy, psychiatric and psychological needs, and gender reassignment or affirmation surgery.
NAMING/PRONOUNS	Introductions in classroom settings, discussions and other forums that include introducing everyone’s name and pronouns.