

SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY



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Introduction to Safe Zone

Thank you for making a commitment to learn more about sexual and gender diversity so that you can better support the LGBTQ+ community at Shenandoah University. This handbook is offered as a base from which you may grow in your understanding of sexual and gender diversity and a place to find helpful resources.

Safe Zone Mission

Safe Zone at Shenandoah University is a network of people who seek to affirm and support sexual and gender diversity. Safe Zone members are working to create a community that understands and honors the value of each unique individual.

Shenandoah University Mission

Educate and inspire individuals to be critical, reflective thinkers; lifelong learners; and ethical, compassionate citizens who are committed to making responsible contributions within a community, a nation and the world.

Shenandoah University 2025 Vision

Supporting the 2025 Vision to Create a World Class Learning Environment

- Deepen and expand Shenandoah’s commitment to inclusion and diversity.
 - Increase university-wide cultural awareness and competency, and develop steps for ensuring cultural sensitivity in the implementation of our work.

What is sexual and gender diversity?

This phrase encompasses sexual and gender identities that do not necessarily fall within the framework of heterosexuality and the male-female binary. It includes (but is not limited to) identities such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, transgender, asexual, pansexual, and questioning. The term “LGBTQ+” -- an acronym commonly used to represent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning -- may be used in place of “sexual and gender diversity” in this handbook, in workshops, and in discussions. In using “LGBTQ+”, the identities that are not represented in the acronym are not meant to be erased; we are simply using the term as a means to describe sexual and gender diversity more concisely.

Why does Shenandoah University Need Safe Zone?

Our LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff may feel invisible on campus and may find the campus climate unsupportive. It can be difficult to safely identify people (“allies”) on campus to turn to for support and information. The LGBTQ+ community experiences mental health issues; sexual, relationship, and physical violence; unemployment and homelessness at higher rates.

Important Statistics

- 57.6% of LGBTQ+ students reported feeling unsafe at their school because of their sexual orientation and 43.3% for their gender expression.
- 58.8% of LGBTQ+ students reported hearing homophobic remarks such as “faggot,” “dyke,” or the expression “that’s so gay” frequently or often
- 48.6% of LGBTQ+ students experienced electronic harassment in the past year¹
- Crimes committed in 2015 due to bias against the victim’s perceived sexual orientation represent 18% of reported hate crime incidents
- 41% percent of transgender people surveyed in Injustice at Every Turn said they had attempted suicide, compared with 1.6 percent of the general population. Risk increased for those who reported bullying, sexual assault and job loss.²
- 48% of LGBTQ+ you out to their parents say that their families make them feel bad for being LGBTQ+.
- 73% of LGBTQ+ youth say they have experienced verbal threats because of their actual or perceived LGBTQ+ identity. ³

Safe Zone Goals

1. Develop Allies: Safe Zone members are allies. They are informed campus partners who have committed time and energy through organized training to learn more about sexual and gender diversity. This goal is accomplished through Safe Zone Workshops offered regularly by the Safe Zone Committee.

2. Support the LGBTQ+ Campus Community: Safe Zone seeks to improve visibility and support for students, faculty, staff, and visitors of Shenandoah University who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and any other sexual or gender identity. Retaining these students, faculty, and staff through visible support is vital. This goal is accomplished through increasing the number of allies on campus who attend workshops focused on support for this community. Resources will also be made available online and through workshops to assist anyone interested in learning more.

3. Increase Awareness of Safe Zone: Safe Zone strives to create a visible community of support that spreads across Shenandoah's campus. This goal is accomplished through giving trained Safe Zone allies a sticker to display publicly to mark safe spaces on campus such as offices and residence hall rooms. This goal will also be

accomplished with an online list of Safe Zone allies, their departments or majors, and their locations on campus. Lastly, this goal will be accomplished through consistent marketing of the Safe Zone program.⁴

Safe Zone Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Safe Zone sticker represent?

The Safe Zone symbol allows the campus community to identify a person who has committed time and energy to attend a Safe Zone workshop. The person has learned about sexual and gender diversity and is committed to increasing their knowledge of and sensitivity to issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. They have access to resources and can share those resources with others. They will listen without criticism or judgment and provide a place where people feel supported, affirmed, and valued.

How Does Safe Zone Fit in to Shenandoah University's Mission?

Safe Zone not only reflects Shenandoah University's mission but specifically embraces the core value of "respect for diverse cultures, experiences, and perspectives."

Stereotypes and generalizations are made about the LGBTQ+ community, but everyone experiences life differently. Intersectionality of other identities such as race, religion, class, nationality, and education impact a person's experience in different ways that may not be addressed by such generalizations and stereotypes.

What resources do I get at this workshop?

At the Safe Zone workshop, participants will receive a Safe Zone Handbook with resources to help navigate the training. In addition, a continually updated online database will be available to Safe Zone members via Google Drive. Participants may sign a pledge at the end of the Safe Zone workshop to identify themselves as an ally and receive a Safe Zone sticker. Certificates of completion are also available upon request.

If I already completed a Safe Zone training at another institution, do I have to participate in a workshop at Shenandoah University in order to get a sticker?

Yes. We ask that anyone who has not participated specifically in Shenandoah's Safe Zone program sign up for one of our workshops. We want all Shenandoah University Safe Zone members to be knowledgeable about resources specific to Shenandoah and also have a current understanding of terminology and issues facing the LGBTQ+ community. Your knowledge and understanding will also be valuable to the other participants in the workshop who may be experiencing Safe Zone for the first time.

¹ GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network), 2015 National School Climate Survey

²The Washington Post: 8 Critical Facts about the State of Transgender America

³Human Rights Campaign

⁴ This section adapted with permission from the Safe Zone Program at UNC Charlotte: <http://safezone.uncc.edu/>

Part II - Understanding Sexuality & Gender

Many people assume that sexuality and gender are the same concept.

For example, if I see a woman who is masculine I might assume she is a lesbian. Or, if I see a man who is wearing feminine clothing I might assume he is gay.

Sexuality and gender are actually *separate* aspects of a person's identity, and one does not determine the other. It is also helpful to think of both sexuality and gender as *fluid*. Although there are a lot of "norms" about sexuality and gender in our society, we can educate ourselves and do our best not to make assumptions.

LGBTQ is an acronym

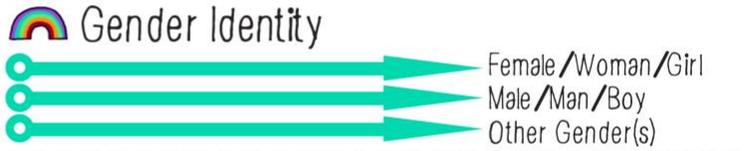
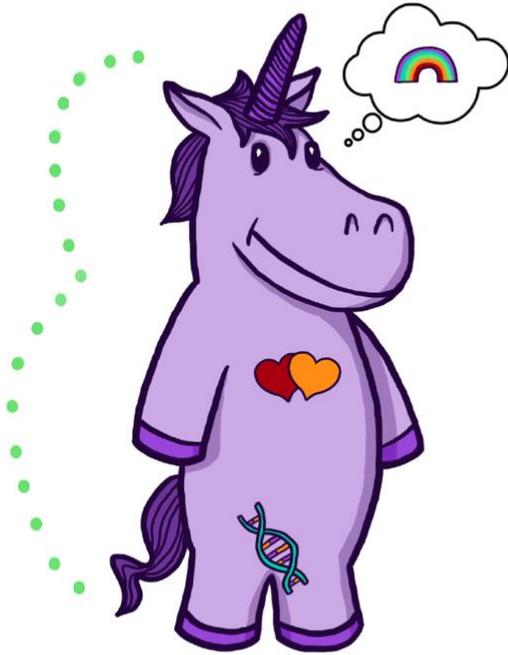
meant to encompass a whole bunch of diverse **sexualities** and **genders**. Folks often refer to the Q (standing for "queer"*) as an **umbrella term**, under which live a whole bunch of identities. This is helpful because **lesbian, gay,** and **bisexual** aren't the only marginalized sexualities, and **transgender*** isn't the only gender identity. In fact, there are many more of both!



* The "Q" sometimes stands for "questioning" and "transgender" is often thought of as an umbrella term itself (sometimes abbreviated "trans"; or "trans*" in writing). Lots of asterisks, lots of exceptions, because hey – we're talking about **lots** of different folks with different lived experiences to be inclusive of.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Cycle of Socialization by Bobbie Harro¹



- The Cycle of Socialization explains how norms are perpetuated in our society. For example: The only genders that exist are man/woman. This clarifies why people feel discomfort when learning about gender identities and expressions, or sexualities that fall out of line with what society has told us is okay. Undoing the values and norms ingrained in us from society takes work, and discomfort will not resolve overnight but because of continuous self-work and effort toward becoming an Ally for these communities.
- **Cycle of Socialization**
 - *The Beginning*: We are all born into a World with these Mechanics in Place. We do not have a choice, it is a part of our tradition, history or habits we own as a culture.
 - *First socialization*: As we get older we are taught on a personal level about the norms that permeate our society. Ex. Boys where blue, Boys do not cry. Women where dresses. These socializations are taught by our parents, relatives, teachers etc., and shape our values and expectations for others.
 - *Institutional and Cultural Socialization*: That initial reinforcement goes further by being perpetuated in our institutional and cultural values. These values become evident in our churches, schools, tv/media, song lyrics, legal system, etc. This is reinforced on a conscious and unconscious level.
 - *Enforcements*: Each of these are enforced through rewards and punishments, privilege, persecution, discrimination, etc.
 - Ex. A person that does not conform to the gender binary can face verbal, or physical abuse to assimilate back in line with what society defines gender to be (man/woman)
 - These enforcements can *result* in dissonance, silence, anger and stress for those that do not conform. This can cause people to make a choice toward Change or to Uphold the Status Quo.
 - At the *core* of this entire cycle, what allows this to continue is fear, ignorance, confusion and insecurity. People are afraid of what is outside the norm, or do not know much about it and this can cause people to keep the same beliefs in place, passing it on from generation to generation.

¹ Adapted from Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook, 2000

Part III - Moving Beyond the Alphabet Soup: Terms and Definitions

The term or letters used to refer to sexual and gender diversity has moved from homosexual to LGBT to LGBTQIQA and many versions in between. The most important thing to remember about terminology is that it is always changing. Consider these *working definitions* and always refer to a person by their *preferred identity*.

Identity Terminology

Ally – Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and straight privilege in themselves and others; a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex people; and a belief that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are social justice issues.

Agender – A person without gender. An agender individual's body does not necessarily correspond with their lack of gender identity. [Related Terms: neutrois, genderless, gender neutral]

Aromantic – A person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others.

Asexual – Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.

Assigned at Birth – Commonly utilized by Trans+ individuals, the term illustrates that the individual's sex (and subsequently gender in early life) was assigned without involving the person whose sex was being assigned. Commonly seen as "Female Assigned at Birth" (FAAB or AFAB) and "Male Assigned at Birth" (MAAB or AMAB)

Biphobia - The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard. Biphobia can be seen within the LGBTQI community, as well as in general society.

Bisexual – A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males/men and females/women. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.

Cisgender – describes someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex.

Cisgender Privilege – The set of privileges conferred to people who are believed to be Cisgender. (Examples: having one's preferred pronouns used, no harassment in public restrooms, no denial of expected access to health care, etc.)

Coming Out – May refer to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersexed person (to "come out" to oneself). May also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexuality, gender identity, or intersexed status with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.). This can be a continual, life-long process for homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, and intersexed individuals.

Demioromantic – A person who does not experience romantic attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone

Demisexual – A person who does not experience sexual attraction unless they form a strong emotional connection with someone.

Discrimination – Prejudice + power. It occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Discrimination can take many forms, including both individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges normally accorded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression for the affected group.

FTM – Abbreviation for a female-to-male transgender person. This term reflects the direction of gender transition. Some prefer the term MTM (Male to Male) to underscore the fact that though they were biologically female, they never had a female gender identity.

Gay –

1. Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense. Not all men who engage in “homosexual behavior” identify as gay, and as such this label should be used with caution.
2. Term used to refer to the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

Gender –

1. Socially constructed system of classifications that ascribes qualities of masculinity and femininity to people. Gender characteristics can change over time and vary between cultures.
2. Someone’s innate sense of being male or female.

Gender Binary – The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

Gender Expression/Performance – How one presents oneself and one’s gender to the world via dress, mannerisms, hairstyle, facial hair, etc. This may or may not coincide with or indicate one’s gender identity. Many utilize gender expression/performance in an attempt to determine the gender/sex of another individual. However, a person’s gender expression may not always match their gender identity.

Gender Identity – A person’s sense of self as masculine, feminine, both or neither regardless of external or internal genitalia.

Gender Non-Conforming/Non-Binary– A term used to describe people who do not conform to the traditional gender binary of male and female. One may identify as male, female, or trans* and also as gender non-conforming.

Genderqueer – An individual whose gender identity is neither male nor female, is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. Sometimes this includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system. Genderqueer individuals may or may not pursue any physical changes, such as hormonal or surgical intervention, and may not identify as trans+.

Heteronormativity – The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality, bisexuality, and other sexual orientations.

Heterosexual – Someone who is sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex. Also known as “straight.”

Heterosexism – Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Usually used to the advantage of the group in power. Any attitude, action, or practice – backed by institutional power – that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation.

Heterosexual Privilege – Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals. Also, the benefits homosexuals and bisexuals receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bisexual identity.

Homophobia – The irrational fear, hatred, or intolerance of people who identify or are perceived as non-heterosexual, including the fear of being read as part of the LGBTQ+ community. It is this fear that enforces sexism as well as heterosexism. Homophobic behavior can range from telling gay jokes, to verbal abuse, to acts of physical violence.

Homosexual – An out of date term for a person who is primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex. Many people view this term as offensive in that it is excessively clinical and sexualizes members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In the Closet – Refers to a homosexual, bisexual, trans person, or intersex person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. An intersex person may be closeted due to ignorance about their status since standard medical practice is to “correct,” whenever possible, intersex conditions early in childhood and to hide the medical history from the patient. There are varying degrees of being “in the closet.” For example, a person can be out in their social life, but in the closet at work or with their family.

Internalized Homophobia – A term used to describe an LGBTQ person who has adopted degrading societal stereotypes about LGBTQ people, causing them to dislike and resent their sexual or gender identity; it also causes a disdain for LGBTQ people who do not assimilate into heterosexual gender norms.

Intersectionality – Different forms or systems of oppression and/or power overlap to shape an individual’s experiences. People’s identities are not one-dimensional, they are often formed by multiple identities, for example someone who identifies as both queer and black. These identities can be considered independently, as each identity has its different obstacles and prejudices to face, but they must also be considered in conjunction with one another as they frequently reinforce and magnify each other. **Example:** *a white, non-English speaking trans person in the United States has very different experiences than a black, English speaking trans person.*

Intersex Person(s) – Individual(s) born with the condition of having physical sex markers (genitals, hormones, gonads, or chromosomes) that are neither clearly male nor female. Intersex people are sometimes defined as having “ambiguous genitalia”

Lesbian – Term used to describe female-identified people attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other female-identified people.

LGBTQ+ – A common abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community. The acronym is used as an umbrella term when talking about non-heterosexual and non-cisgender identities, and does not always reflect members of the community. The acronym may be expanded to LGBTQIA to include intersex individuals, allies, and/or asexual people, or shortened to LGBQ when discussing only sexual orientation.

(Mis)Gendering – A term used to describe the process by which people categorize other people’s gender, based on perceived morphology, without regard to how the other person self-identifies. These misperceptions can cause the mis-gendered person to feel distress, anxiety, depression, and invisibility. To avoid misgendering someone who is androgynous, genderqueer, or trans, simply ask what pronouns they prefer.

MTF – Abbreviation for a male-to-female transgender person. This term reflects the direction of gender transition. Some people prefer the term FTF (Female to Female) to underscore the fact that though they were biologically male, they never had a male gender identity.

Outing – When someone discloses information about another’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their knowledge and/or consent.

Pansexual – A person who has the potential to be attracted to all or many gender identities and expressions.

Polysexual – A term used to describe someone who has an enduring or continuing orientation toward sexual encounters and/or intimate relationships that include more than two people. Polyqueer sexualities are sexual encounters/interactions or intimate relationships that, through plurality, challenge heteronormativity.

Preferred Gender Pronouns (PGP) - Pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use when talking to or about that individual. Ex: she/her/hers, he/him/his, ze/hir/hirs

Prejudice – A conscious or unconscious negative belief about a whole group of people and its individual members. Anyone can be prejudiced toward another individual or group.

Queer –

1. An umbrella term that embraces a matrix of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of the not-exclusively-heterosexual-and-monogamous majority. “Queer” includes lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transpeople, intersex persons, the radical sex communities, and many other sexually transgressive (underworld) explorers.

2. This term is sometimes used as a sexual orientation or gender identity label used to denote a non-heterosexual or cisgender identity without having the need to define specifics.

3. A reclaimed word that was formerly used solely as a slur but that has been reclaimed by some folks in the LGBTQIA community. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘queer’ to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexual people is often considered offensive.

Questioning – An individual who is unsure of and/or exploring their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Sex - A medical term designating a certain combination of gonads, chromosomes, external gender organs, secondary sex characteristics and hormonal balances. Because “sex” is usually subdivided into “male” and “female,” this category does not recognize the existence of intersex bodies.

Sexual Orientation – The desire for intimate emotional and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender/sex, another gender/sex, or multiple genders/sexes.

Stereotype – A preconceived or oversimplified generalization about an entire group of people without regard for their individual differences. Though often negative, can also be complimentary. Even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact, however, simply because they involve broad generalizations that ignore individual realities.

Straight – Another term for heterosexual.

Trans* - An abbreviation that is sometimes used to refer to a transgender/gender queer/gender non-conforming person. This use allows a person to state a gender variant identity without having to disclose hormonal or surgical status/intentions. This term is sometimes used to refer to the gender variant and gender non-conforming community as a whole.

Transgender – A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on sex and gender assigned at birth. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity.

Transition – This term is primarily used to refer to the process a gender variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

Transphobia – The irrational hatred of those who are transgender or gender non-conforming, sometimes expressed through violent and sometimes deadly means.

Two-Spirit – An umbrella term applied to Indigenous North Americans who embody one of many traditional mixed gender roles found among Native American and Canadian First Nation cultures. Two-spirited persons do not fit neatly into Western transgender categories. It is a term of reverence, traditionally referring to people who display both masculine and feminine characteristics who are thought to have higher spiritual powers. As such they may play significant roles in society as healers or leaders.

Ze – Pronounced “zee” or “see,” this term corresponds to “he and she” and is used as a gender-neutral pronoun.

Language and Oppression

Remember that terms have meaning. Social justice and language are intimately linked. Language has been used to dehumanize, sexualize, and demonize LGBTQ+ individuals. Remember: use the language preferred by the individual; when in doubt, ask for preferred terms or pronouns; be aware that language changes and preferred terms change.

This terminology sheet was originally created by Eli R. Green and Erica Peterson of the LGBT Resource Center at the University of California, Riverside © 2003-2004 and has been revised using resources from the following organizations: University of California, Riverside; MIT; University of California, Berkeley; George Washington University; California State University, San Marco; University of California, San Diego; Bowling Green State University; The Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN), and Wikipedia. Updated August 2015 with the assistance of members of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals.

Gender Neutral Pronouns

-----Getting to Know Gender-Neutral Pronouns! -----

Traditional Masculine	He laughed	I called him	His eyes gleam	That is his	He likes himself
Traditional Feminine	She laughed	I called her	Her eyes gleam	That is hers	She likes herself
Gender Neutral (Singular They)	They laughed	I called them	Their eyes gleam	That is theirs	They like themselves
Gender Neutral (Ze)	Ze laughed (pronounced: "zee" as in the letter 'z')	I called hir (pronounced: "here")	Hir eyes gleam (pronounced: "here")	That is hirs (pronounced: "here's")	Ze likes hirself (pronounced: "here- self")

Gender Neutral Pronouns in Writing:

A separate challenge for individuals in the LGBTQ+ community may be writing academically when they use gender neutral pronouns to identify themselves, or to identify others in their lives and in their work. It is important to allow students to use their preferred pronouns, and, specifically, to allow for the use of singular they in academic writing.

The use of singular "they" has been widely accepted by the International Writing Center Association (a conference of the National Council of Teachers of English), the American Psychological Association, as well as contributors to the Oxford University Press. Additionally, the singular they has been used in written and spoken English as early as the 1400s in the Old English Dictionary. Using the singular "they" allows writers to avoid specifying gender when they feel it is irrelevant, inappropriate or restrictive. It also allows individuals to represent people who use "they" as their gender pronoun more accurately. Singular they allows writers to affirm the reality of their own identity and the identity of others who may not identify within the gender binary.¹

You can find additional guidance and information regarding the use of gender-inclusive pronouns in writing from the following sources:

Purdue University OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/595/4/>

National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www2.ncte.org/statement/genderfairuseoflang/>

International Writing Centers Association:

<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/centerforcampuslife/lgbtqia/SINGULARTHEY.pdf>

American Psychological Association Style Blog: <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2015/11/the-use-of-singular-they-in-apa-style.html>

¹ Adapted from the International Writing Center Association's Statement on usage of singular they
<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/centerforcampuslife/lgbtqia/SINGULARTHEY.pdf>

Part IV - Challenges LGBTQ+ People Might Face

It is important to know about these *potential* shared experiences of LGBTQ+ people. Not all people experience life in the same way and you shouldn't make assumptions. You also do not have to be an expert on the items below to simply **be there** for someone when they are going through a difficult time.

Safety

- risk of violence

Health

- Mental Health
 - Isolation
 - Low Self-Esteem
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Suicidal Ideations
- Sexual Health
 - Fewer resources about sex education for LGBTQ individuals
- Body Image

Coming Out

- Rejection by family and/or friends
- Loss of spiritual foundation
- Loss of financial support
- Harassment, abuse
- Discrimination
- Loss of employment

Oppression

- Heterosexism
- Social Avoidance/Exclusion

Identity Development

- Internalized oppression
- Expressed or perceived gender, ability to "pass"
- Misuse of gender pronouns or preferred name

Substance Abuse

- LGBTQ individuals use tobacco products at a rate of 43% compared to 17% in the general population.
- 25% of gay men and lesbians are heavy alcohol users. With trans* people reporting 34% for heavy alcohol abuse.

Struggles with Faith

Relationship Differences

- Family problems/rejection
- Sexual relationships
- Interpersonal violence

Financial Burdens

- Loss of financial support from family
- Costs of gender transition, healthcare

Employment Discrimination

- In the state of Virginia, it is still legal to discriminate based on sexual orientation, and gender expression.

Intersectionality

- Additional levels of oppression based on nationality, language, race, socioeconomic status, etc.
- Stereotypes and generalizations are made about the LGBTQ+ community, but everyone experiences life differently. Intersectionality of other identities such as race, religion, class, nationality, and education

impact a person's experience in different ways that may not be addressed by such generalizations and stereotypes.

¹ This section adapted with permission from the Safe Zone Program at UNC Charlotte: <http://safezone.uncc.edu/>

Part V - Coming Out:

What is coming out?

Coming out refers to the process by which one accepts one's own sexuality, gender identity, or status as an intersex person (to "come out" to oneself). It may also refer to the process by which one shares one's sexuality, gender identity, or intersex status with others (to "come out" to friends, etc.). Coming out is often a continual, life-long process for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Empathy v. Sympathy

When a person comes out to you it is important to engage in empathy, not sympathy.

Empathy drives connection, whereas sympathy drives disconnection.

Empathy allows you to support a person who is coming out by recognizing the validity of their feelings and how difficult their situation is.

When Someone Comes Out To You...

- ★ Offer support, but don't assume a person needs help
- ★ Acknowledge the person's courage
- ★ LISTEN
- ★ Assure and respect confidentiality
- ★ Reflect on what the person is telling you in a way that demonstrates understanding, acceptance, and compassion
- ★ Remember that the person has not changed
- ★ Be prepared to give a referral
- ★ Be aware that the decision about whether or not to come out is personal. A person's relationships, social circles, and communities may not accept them. The decision to come out to parents or guardians could especially result in financial and housing issues in addition to being ostracized from loved ones. Recognize these difficulties when a person is struggling with the decision to come out to others.
- ★ The person may ask for advice, they may not.
 - Do not give unsolicited advice.
- ★ Respect the person's autonomy and agency.
 - Avoid telling them what they should/must/need to do.
- ★ Respect the person's privacy
 - Just because they came out to *you* does not mean they are out to *everyone*. Do not share the person's identity or orientation with others.
- ★ Offer continued support.
 - Coming out is not a "one and done" experience, but rather a continual process.

What NOT to say when someone comes out to you...

- ★ "I knew it!"
- ★ "Are you sure?"
- ★ "Are you confused?"
- ★ "You just haven't found the right man/woman"

- ★ “Shhh, don’t tell anyone”
- ★ “You can’t be gay, you’ve had relationships with people of the opposite sex”

Coming out resources modified from GLSEN’s guide When A Student Comes Out to You...Today or Any Day!

Part VI – Heterosexual Privilege & Heterosexism

What is heterosexual privilege?

The basic civil rights and social privileges that a heterosexual individual automatically receives, which are systematically denied to gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons on the sole basis of sexual orientation.

Heterosexual Privilege is...

- Having your sexual orientation be identified as normal
- Your right to get married is never a questioned or attacked
- Public recognition and support for an intimate relationship, supporting activities, and social expectation of longevity and stability for the committed relationship
- Ample and Fairly Accurate Media Representation
- You cannot be fired from a position based on your sexual orientation
- Living with a partner and doing so openly
- Receiving validation from the religious community
- Learning about your privilege instead of experiencing oppression first-hand

What is heterosexism?

Heterosexism is the discrimination or prejudice against LGBT individuals on the assumption that heterosexuality is the “normal” sexual orientation, or prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities, combined with the majority power to impose such prejudice. Any attitude, action, or practice – backed by institutional power – that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation. This mindset is pervasive through American culture, and is very problematic and oppressive towards individuals whose sexual orientation is not heterosexual.

Using heterosexual privilege to create change:

Be an ally, know the facts of institutional oppression against the LGBTQ+ community, and confront and challenge it whenever possible!

Modified from the North Dakota State University Safe Zone Ally Training, 2016.

https://www.ndsu.edu/safezone/allies/safe_zone_training_manual/

Part VII - Guide to Being an Ally to LGBTQ Students

What is an Ally?

An ally is a person who speaks out and stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against. An ally works to end oppression by supporting and advocating for people who are stigmatized, discriminated against or treated unfairly. For the LGBTQ+ community, an ally is any person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Allies can make a significant contribution to the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

Why be an Ally?

All students are at risk of being bullied, harassed, called names, or assaulted, but LGBTQ+ students can face particularly hostile university environments. Your visible support for these students can make a real difference in ways that will benefit the whole university. Having supportive university staff, faculty, and students has a positive effect on a student's educational experience.

Be visible

One of the most important parts of being an ally to the LGBTQ+ community is making yourself known as an ally. In order to come to you for help, people need to be able to recognize you as an ally. Even if people do not come to you directly, just knowing that there are supporters at the university can help them feel safer.

Post the Safe Zone sticker in a visible place: on your door, window, laptop, etc.

Add the Safe Zone logo to your email signature and your syllabus.

Display LGBTQ+ supportive materials.

Make yourself visible during events.

Know Your Resources

Coming out can be very emotional. So can bullying and harassment that LGBTQ+ students might face. Sometimes students face banishment from family and faith. At Shenandoah University there are three immediate resources for students in distress:

1. Student of Concern Reporting

Fellow students, family members, faculty and staff can play an invaluable role in helping students who are in distress. Your expression of interest, concern, and compassion is an important factor toward a student seeking the assistance they need. A student of concern is any student who is displaying behaviors that may get in the way of a student's ability to be successful in the University environment. To report a student of concern please complete [this form](#) which will be directed to an appropriate member of our Care Team.

<http://www.student-life.su.edu/campus-life/student-of-concern/>

2. Bias Reporting Form

Incidents of bias or hate affecting a person or group create a hostile campus climate and negatively impact the quality of the Shenandoah experience for community members. Shenandoah takes such incidents seriously and will investigate and respond appropriately to reported incidents of bias or hate. Bias Incidents are single or multiple adverse acts toward an individual, group, or their property that are so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that they create a hostile learning or work environment that one could reasonably conclude is based upon actual or perceived sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, immigration status, political affiliation, marital status, parental status, spirituality, socio-economic status, or any combination of these or other protected classes recognized by law. Bias incidents can be reported here:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?ShenandoahUniv&layout_id=2

3. The Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is here to offer you short term personal counseling as part of the Wilkins Wellness Center. The Counseling Center is available to assist in the promotion of overall wellness so students can be successful both

academically and in their personal lives. You can schedule an appointment online: <http://www.student-life.su.edu/counseling-center-home/>

Mandated Reporting

Please remember university staff must be cognizant of the highly sensitive nature of information regarding a student's sexual orientation or gender identity at all times. Staff & faculty must exercise the utmost discretion and professionalism and be respectful of student privacy in discussing these matters. In cases involving sexual misconduct or if you fear a student is in harm or going to harm someone else, staff and faculty are **mandated reporters**.

Respond to Anti-LGBTQ Language and Behavior

Anti-LGBTQ+ behavior comes in all shapes and sizes: biased language, name-calling, harassment and even physical assault. Allies can make a difference by intervening in anti-LGBTQ+ name-calling, bullying and harassment every time they witness it. Taking action when you see it occur can help create a safe space for all people. Intervening on the spot will also serve as a teachable moment to let other students know that anti-LGBTQ behavior will not be tolerated.

Support Student Clubs and Groups

For many LGBTQ+ students, student clubs that address LGBTQ+ student issues offer critical support. Support their information tables and events as an ally.

- **Spectrum:** Shenandoah University Spectrum exists to promote safety, education, and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. Spectrum also seeks to celebrate the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community. Contact Mack Booth mbooth16@su.edu
- **The “Q” in Question:** The “Q” in Question is a four-week series discussion about Christianity, sexual orientation and gender identity that takes place in Goodson Chapel/Recital Hall and is led by Worship Arts Coordinator DeLyn Celec. This discussion may not be for you if your faith tradition requires you to be intolerant of LGBTQ persons, Christian persons, or both. Contact DeLyn Celec dcelec@su.edu.

Make your Classroom or Meeting Space LGBTQ Inclusive: Let students in class or in student group meetings introduce themselves instead of calling roll to avoid using unwanted gender pronouns or names. Introduce yourself using your gender pronouns so that others feel comfortable doing the same thing (ex: “I am Maggie and my pronouns are she/her.” Inclusive curriculum that provides positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history and events helps to create a tone of acceptance and increases awareness of LGBTQ+ -related issues, resulting in a more supportive environment for LGBTQ students. For example, when teaching about the Holocaust or about civil rights movements, be sure to include the persecution, struggles and successes of the LGBTQ+ community.

Be a role model for your peers: Let your action as an ally inform others. Use the appropriate terms and correct people when you hear incorrect or derogatory language. Use gender-inclusive pronouns and LGBTQ+ inclusive language. Intervene when anti-LGBTQ+ behavior occurs and show other faculty and staff how to advocate for changes within the university. Let other staff, faculty, and students know you are an ally and encourage them to become members of Safe Zone.

Discuss with others: In the hallway, during lunch or whenever you have a moment, share information with others. Tell them about experiences of LGBTQ+ students at the University, some of the anti-LGBTQ+ behavior incidents you have responded to, or changes in the University that you would like to see. Letting others know about the concrete things they can do may help being an ally a realistic option for them.

Stay informed of current social and political issues impacting the LGBTQ+ community.

Discuss current events with your peers and in your classrooms.

Advocate for professional development: Work to obtain training for staff and faculty on the experiences of LGBTQ+ student and anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and harassment. Give a presentation to your department or office to discuss the issues facing LGBTQ+ people. Support campus initiatives by joining committees or task forces. If you want to do more with Safe Zone, for example, let your facilitator know!

You have taken the first step to becoming an ally!

Modified from The Safe Space Kit: Guide to Being an Ally to LGBT Students. (2013). 1st ed. [ebook] Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. Available at: <http://www.glsen.org/download/file/MzE3MA==> [Accessed 25 Sep. 2014].

Local and National LGBTQ Resources

This list is a work in progress. Feel free to suggest additional resources that you are familiar with to your facilitators.

Social/Political

The Hideaway Café	http://www.hideawaycafeva.com/	(540) 450-0799
Equality Virginia	http://www.equalityvirginia.org/ info@equalityvirginia.org	(804) 643-4816
Human Rights Campaign	http://www.hrc.org/	

Spiritual*

SU Spiritual Life	http://www.su.edu/spiritual-life/ spirituallife@su.edu	(540) 535-3546
Christ Church Episcopal	http://www.christchurchwinchester.org	(540-662-5843)
UUC Shenandoah Valley	http://uushenandoah.org/ minister@uushenandoah.org	(540) 869-6965
Metropolitan Community Church	http://mccchurch.org/ MCCchurches@gmail.com	(310) 360-8640
New Light MCC	http://www.newlightmcc.com NewLightMCC@hotmail.com	(301) 797-5698
Search for affirming churches in your area:	http://www.gaychurch.org/find_a_church/	

*Note that there are denominations that affirm LGBTQ+ people but congregations that do not. There are also congregations that are very affirming but are part of denominations that are not. Don't hesitate to send an email or call the church to confirm.

University

Safe Zone Committee	safezone@su.edu	(540) 535-3531
Counseling Center	counseling@su.edu	(540) 665-4530
Wilkins Wellness Center	mkincer@su.edu	(540) 665-4530
SU Spectrum	mmccampb@su.edu , BSC 120	(540) 535-3531
The Mosaic Center for Diversity	mmccampb@su.edu , BSC 120	(540) 535-3531
[Not Just] Women's Center	scelec112@su.edu , 201 Cooley	(540) 535-3463
Department of Public Safety	rfrye2@su.edu , Wilkins Building	(540) 665-4614

All-Gender/Family Restrooms on Campus*

Building	Location**
Athletic & Events Center (All-gender)	Lobby
Brandt Student Center (2) (All-gender)	2 nd floor, hallway behind info desk
Goodson Chapel-Recital Hall (All-gender)	Lobby
Health and Life Sciences Building (Family)	1 st floor, across from room 165
John Kerr Building/ SCAA (Family)	Main Level, on the right next to family waiting room
Parker Hall (2) (All-gender)	Lower Level
University Inn (unmarked)	Lobby

*All-gender restrooms can be used by anyone regardless of gender identity or expression. All-gender restrooms are a step to ensure a more inclusive campus environment.

**Additional restroom locations can be found on the SafeZone Website.

Transgender Legal Resources

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights	http://www.ed.gov/ocr
OCR "Dear Colleague" Letter to School Administrators	http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf
Claim Your Rights resources from PFLAG and GLSEN	http://community.pflag.org/claimyourrights
Gender Spectrum	http://www.genderspectrum.org
Trans Youth Family Allies	http://www.imatyfa.org
Links to State and Local Human Rights Agencies	http://www.justice.gov/crt/legalinfo/stateandlocal.php
Links to LGBT Legal Organizations	http://transequality.org/Resources/links.html#legal
Links to Legal Services Organizations	http://www.lsc.gov/find-legal-aid

Health Resources

The Fenway Institute (LGBT Health Resources)	http://fenwayhealth.org/the-fenway-institute/
National LGBT Health Education Center: Resources and Readings	http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/publications/lgbt-health-resources/
Self-Assessment Checklist for Personnel Providing Services and Supports to LGBTQ Youth and Their Families	http://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/Final%20LGBTQ%20Checklist.pdf

National Resources

GLBT National Help Center	http://www.glnh.org/	(888) 843-4564
Trevor Project	http://thetrevorproject.org	(866) 488-7386
TransProud	http://www.transproud.com	
Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA)	www.gender.org	
GLSEN Sports Project	http://sports.glsen.org	

Hotlines:

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Helpline

(888) 340-4528

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender National Hotline

(888) 843-4564

GLBT National Youth Talkline

(800) 246-7743

Peer Listening Line

(800) 399-PEER

Trans Lifeline

(877) 565-8860

Trevor Helpline Crisis Intervention for LGBTQ Youth

(866) 488-7386