

# A Quick Guide For LGBTQ Inclusion

*The first step towards creating a fully inclusive culture and environment is a commitment to a vision and the values of equality and respect for all people—and cultivating the language necessary to communicate those values and put them into action.*

## USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE ON ALL COMMUNICATIONS

Instead of saying “Ladies and Gentleman”, “Boys and Girls”, etc, trying using language that is all-inclusive such as, folks, families, congregants, community members, friends, campers, etc.

## ENSURE INCLUSIVE DOCUMENTS

- Do your forms ask folks to choose M/F? Ask yourself, “Why am I asking this question?” Do I really need to know the answer or is it something we’ve just been doing as an institution? If you do need, try writing ‘Gender’ and leaving a blank space for someone to self-identify.
- Do your forms say husband/wife? Mom/Dad? Is there space for someone to write in their response if they don’t see the term that fits their identity? Instead try using parent/guardian 1 and parent/guardian 2 or spouse/partner.

## DESIGNATE AN ALL-GENDER RESTROOM

It’s important that all members of our community feel safe and included. For many transgender people and people who don’t conform to societal gender norms, using a public restroom is a daily struggle. Trans and gender expansive people are often harassed, physically assaulted, or questioned by authorities in both men’s and women’s bathrooms if they are assumed to be in the wrong bathroom. All-gender restrooms provide access to safe bathrooms and changing areas for people of any gender identity and presentation. They also provide safe spaces for those who need the assistance of a personal care attendant or those with small children.

You can do this simply by designating an already existing single stall restroom as an all-gender restroom. Find a sign to do this on Keshet’s website.

## PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL EVENTS/PROMOTE LOCAL EVENTS

- Have a group march in your local Pride parade.
- If you know of an LGBTQ/Jewish event in your area, promote it!
- Advertise your events in local LGBTQ forums/publications.

## RESPECT PEOPLE’S NAMES AND PRONOUNS AND DON’T ASSUME ANYONE’S NAMES/PRONOUNS

Using people’s pronouns and names is one of the biggest and easiest ways you can show respect. Normalize this by having everyone share their pronouns during introductions. Also, show respect by not assuming their sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, when talking to a teen about dating, don’t automatically assume that they are interested in the opposite sex.

## HOST A TRAINING

Host a training for your staff/community members on terms/concepts.

## UPDATE YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURE

- Add your pronouns in your email signature.
- Add a statement of inclusion in your email signature.



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## HAVE LGBTQ PROGRAMMING

- Host a Pride Shabbat.
- Host a speaker during services to speak about LGBTQ inclusion.
- Celebrate LGBTQ holidays and days of mourning and add them to your calendar:
  - Ex: Pride month
  - [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#), an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.
  - [National Coming Out Day](#), each year on Oct. 11, National Coming Out Day continues to promote a safe world for LGBTQ individuals to live truthfully and openly .
  - Additionally, on Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, your community can remember Jewish and non-Jewish LGBTQ victims alongside all other victims of the Holocaust.
- Find Queer themes in Jewish holidays and talk about them! Ex: Purim, Passover, etc.

## CHANGE YOUR POLICIES

Explicitly state in your policies that your organization is affirming and inclusive of all diverse people including and not limited to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. And make sure that your policies are visible.

The necessary documents include a comprehensive anti-bullying statement for folks, inclusive anti-harassment Human Resources policies for staff, and a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. These statements should be easily available on your website, printed in your parent and student handbook, and available upon request.

## INCLUSION IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

Every organization is different, and no one knows your organization better than you. No matter how many trainings you hold, safe space signs you put up or anti-bullying policies you put into place, the only true way to create a fully open and supportive community is to be committed to values of equality and respect all the time, every day. Have your staff check in regularly and discuss how you are meeting your goals and achieving your values. This time for reflection does not necessarily require special meetings, but can be incorporated into your regular staff meetings and check-ins. Bring your teens into the conversation. Brainstorm new ways to encourage greater equality and respect, address any issues and make it an ongoing conversation in your community. An organization that cares deeply about the safety and happiness of their LGBTQ teens will undoubtedly be a wonderful place for them to belong.

## TIPS

- Don't ask about people's bodies—we don't ask cisgender people about their genitals, no reason to ask a trans/genderqueer person about theirs
- Every trans/genderqueer person is different—don't assume one answer applies to everyone
- Don't ask what someone's "real name" is unless it's for medical or legal reasons. The name they introduced themselves as is their real name
- Identity is fluid; people explore and try on new identities to see what fits. If someone identifies one way today and explores and realizes their identity is something different, that's okay! Knowing that their organization is welcoming and inclusive allows people to figure out their authentic selves.
- Don't automatically group folks by binary gender (man/woman)
  - It is often an impulse to group students based on binary gender (boys and girls). However, this is problematic for several reasons: it renders gender non-conforming or transgender teens invisible by assuming a binary gender and it categorizes teens without consent. It also encourages teens to view gender as an either/or category, which reinforces stereotypes and, it discourages teens from branching out and exploring friendships and experiences beyond their assigned or assumed gender. Instead try asking teens to count off, divide them alphabetically, or by birthdays when you need to create a group.



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