

Event Checklist: Best Practices for LGBTQ+ Belonging

This checklist is designed to help your organization plan an event, meeting, or training that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ participants. Whether an event is specifically marketed towards LGBTQ+ participants or not, always assume members of the LGBTQ+ community are among the attendees. It offers helpful suggestions across several areas of event planning, before, during, and after an event.

Note: Working towards LGBTQ+ belonging is ongoing and ever-evolving. Because identities and relationships evolve, no checklist should be considered the sole definitive outline for fostering belonging. Nevertheless, the steps below can help an organization create events that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ participants and can help ensure that no details get lost in the shuffle of complex event planning.

Before the Event

Venue

If you are planning an event for which people will travel, like a regional or national conference, consider LGBTQ+ rights and particularly safety for transgender and nonbinary travelers when selecting the city and state for your event.

- ❑ Ask if the venue has experience hosting LGBTQ+-friendly events.
 - ❑ If possible, negotiate to include the “Force Majeure/Excuse of Performance” in your contract, in the event the venue’s state or city law enacts anti-LGBTQ+ legislation between the signing of a contract and your program requires you change location (i.e. state “bathroom bills”).
- ❑ Ask if the venue has all-gender restrooms. If they do not, ask if they can designate their current restrooms as all-gender restrooms for the duration of the event. Offer to provide signage indicating all-gender restrooms.
 - ❑ Bring Keshet’s All-Gender Restroom Printable Signs.
- ❑ Ask the venue to communicate preferred language use to staff. For example, ask security / ushers / wait staff / photographers to use “everyone / all / honored guests” rather than “ladies and gentlemen.”
 - ❑ Also ask that venue staff share all restroom information when asked. They should not make gendered assumptions about guests (e.g. “The women’s restrooms are here” implies “you use the women’s restroom”). Instead, they can say, “Women’s restrooms are here, men’s restrooms are around the corner, and the all-gender restroom is there.”
- ❑ Ensure caterers and sponsors support LGBTQ+ belonging (i.e., a specific caterer may refuse service to LGBTQ+ customers, and your organization’s money is better spent elsewhere).

- ❑ If applicable, identify and use a security team who understands that different security protocols should be employed for different types of events. The security approach for an individual large event is different from regular security of building and staff. In the latter case it is important to build relationships between security staff, organizers, and participants.
 - ❑ When our security procedures alienate and isolate those who are “othered,” we risk not only causing harm but also risk losing the potential to engage all members of our vibrant community. Make sure that the security team is briefed on the diversity found within the Jewish community, as it relates to race, to ensure that LGBTQ+ Jews of Color aren’t targeted for racially charged reasons.
 - ❑ It is also important to consider the language and context guests will have before they encounter security, the training and cultural awareness the security team has received, and fear and anxiety marginalized folks might bring with them to security heavy situations.

Event Invite

- ❑ Use gender-inclusive language: “everyone / all / honored guests” rather than “ladies and gentlemen.”
- ❑ Include info about Accessible All Gender restrooms, and note that they will be designated as such by an ADA/Accessible Restroom sign posted outside the restroom.
- ❑ Include language around security and ID documents, such as:
 - ❑ “When you enter the building, security will ask you for a government issued photo ID to ensure it matches the name on your registration. If the name you registered with is different from the name on your ID, please let us know as soon as possible so we can ensure a smooth check-in with security.”
 - ❑ Provide contact information for the event coordinator so that attendees can ask questions in advance.

Registration Form

It’s important to know your purpose: why you’re collecting gender data, how it will be used, and who will have access to it. Consult Keshet’s [Guide to Creating LGBTQ-Inclusive Forms](#) for more details.

- ❑ **Gender:** If you determine that you need to know a person’s gender, use one of these two approaches.
 - ❑ Allow individuals to write their gender in an open text write-in field which ensures inclusivity and avoids implying that only certain gender terms are valid.
 - ❑ Provide an expansive list of gender options, where people can choose multiple options while including a “prefer to self-describe” option instead of “other.” This strategy makes it easier for searching, sorting, and analyzing data.
- ❑ **Pronouns:** Should be an optional rather than a required piece of information. You can ask pronouns by providing checkboxes with multiple options, as well as a write-in option.

- ❑ **Gender-neutral terminology:** When collecting information, use language that is gender-neutral and open-ended rather than making assumptions.
 - ❑ Child, youth, young person, camper, student, participant rather than “son/daughter”
 - ❑ Parent/Guardian or Caregiver rather than “mother/father”
 - ❑ Spouse/Partner rather than “husband/wife”
- ❑ **Parents/Guardians:** People live in a wide array of family structures and households. When collecting household information, ask for information about “Adult 1,” and allow the user to “add adult” and “add child” until all members of the household are listed.
- ❑ **Photography:** Include a photo release in your registration. At the event check-in, provide stickers to add to nametags for those who do not want to be photographed.

At the Event

Greetings

- ❑ Use gender-inclusive language: “everyone / all / honored guests” rather than “ladies and gentlemen”
- ❑ If introducing a guest, confirm the name and pronouns they go by in advance.

Signage

- ❑ Post signage designating all available restrooms, including all-gender restrooms. (Keshet’s [All-Gender Restroom Printable Signs](#).)
- ❑ Consider adding signage about welcoming attendees of all identities. Examples could include Keshet’s [LGBTQ+ Jewish Safe Zone stickers](#) or [Trans Jews Belong Here signs](#).
- ❑ When displaying Pride Flags, be inclusive of the [range of identities](#) in the LGBTQ+ Community: consider using the [Progress Pride Flag](#) instead of the six-stripe rainbow flag, and include a Transgender Pride flag. There are also [Jewish Pride Signs](#).

Check In Table

- ❑ Blank name tags and markers (in case attendees want to go by a different name than the one with which they registered).
- ❑ Pronoun pins (include multiple options, as well as blank buttons with a nearby permanent marker so that attendees can write their own pronouns if theirs are not reflected in the supply).
- ❑ Stickers available for folks who do not want to be photographed.

During the Program

- ❑ Provide content warnings in advance for sensitive subjects, including homophobia, transphobia, and gendered violence.
- ❑ In the event a presenter and/or attendee engages anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric or behavior, ensure a designated staff member is on hand to intervene.

After the Event

Feedback

- ❑ In your event feedback form, include a section asking whether attendees' needs were met, and whether any changes could be made for future events.
- ❑ Reflect on what worked and what didn't and dig deep to find out why. Make notes for the next event.

Additional Resources

True belonging is multi-faceted, just like humans are! We encourage you to use the additional resources below alongside this checklist to cultivate inclusion from other perspectives:

- ❑ Disability-friendly event checklists: [Cornell](#), [Stanford](#)
- ❑ Body diversity is another component to consider when making spaces more inclusive. For a deeper dive on understanding weight bias, visit [Fat Torah](#) or [Health at Every Size](#). For fat-inclusive event considerations, visit Jessi Kneeland's [5 Ways to Make Your Business or Service More Fat-Friendly](#) and this [fat-friendly home checklist](#)
- ❑ Dig into security plan considerations with [Keshet Conversations: High Holiday Safety for LGBTQ+ Jews of Color with Joshua Maxey](#), and [9 Things to Consider when Creating An Inclusive Security Plan—URJ](#), and this [URJ Creating Inclusive Events Checklist](#)