



Gender uPSIDEedOWN

Agenda

- 1 Intro
- 2 Icebreaker
- 3 Terminology
- 4 Taking Action, Causing Change
- 5 Gender Awareness in Schools
- 6 Closing

Objectives

- Create a safe and respectful environment in which everyone feels comfortable and can participate
- To promote trans awareness in everyday life
- To help students find ways to be more transinclusive in their schools
- Discuss TDoR and how to use it as an ASK
- To have fun :D

Terminology

Break participants into groups of 3-4, give each group a number of flash cards with definitions and words to match [8-10 min]. Have them discuss in their groups once finished. Bring group back together to discuss previous activity. [10-15 min]

- How do you define gender?
- How does gender affect our everyday lives? What problems does it cause?
- What terms are difficult to distinguish between? Why?
- How do these terms relate to trans issues?
- Why is it important to be familiar with these terms?
- How much did you know; what is surprising?

Taking Action, Causing Change

Have participants read article "A Woman for Her Time" out loud. [6-8 min] What can we learn from Sylvia Rivera's example? Discuss this and how it relates to TDoR and how we can learn from and be inspired by people like Silvia Rivera. Discuss TDoR and what types of things GSAs can organize around it. [20 min]

- What can GSAs do to be more inclusive?

- Why is it important to be inclusive? What if we don't have any transgender students in our club?
- What is TDoR?
- Do you feel personally connected, how do you feel?
- What can GSAs do to help change their school environment?

Gender Awareness in Schools

Brainstorm ways to be inclusive in school [5 min]. Have two volunteers come up and have a conversation in front of the group, but ask them not to use gender specific pronouns. [3-5 minutes] Why was this difficult? Discuss gender neutral pronouns, preferred gender pronouns [PGPs] and how to incorporate these in your GSA meetings. [10 min]

- Why is it important to use these at GSA meetings?
- How can you incorporate these into meetings? [introductions before beginning, use name, grade and PGP, on a regular basis, etc]
- How do you confront problems concerning incorrect use of PGPs?
- Why is this such a difficult problem and how are you specifically prepared to help create change in relation to this problem?
- How can we actively combat the gender binary and stereotypes?
- What types of workshops/teacher trainings can GSAs run to support this? [what about just a workshop about gender and the gender binary, spectrum, etc. Don't just focus on transgender issues, but on gender in general]

Gender Terminology from <http://thegenderproject.org/Glossary.html>

Gender: A culture and system of meaning that is assigned to, associated with, and educated to people according to the interpretation of their body. A conceptual framework for understanding the body and responding to it. Institutionalized gender is typically constructed as a binary system - masculine and feminine. There are cultures that recognize more than two genders though. Components of gender include sex, clothing, hair style, emphasized/sexualized body parts, expected sexual partners, roles in society, interests, pronouns, names and much more. Being a social construction, gender is influenced by other cultural identities and practices. There are/have been different constructions of genders for different races and ethnicities, time periods, locations, cultures, subcultures, religions, nationalities, socioeconomic classes, etc. As a social construction, gender is open to deconstruction.

Sex: An identity that is usually defined by biological markers such as chromosomes and genitalia. In western culture, two sexes are institutionally recognized - male and female. Like all identities, sex is socially constructed. In other words, although there may be distinct differences between people who are typically identified as male and people who typically are identified as female, the fact that we place any meaning or importance on those differences, and use them to construct social identities and structures, is a decision we decide to make as a society. Sex could just as easily be defined by other markers, or not exist at all. Race and ethnicity are identical to sex in that they too are identities that are defined by biological markers. In their cases, the biological markers are things like skin pigment, hair texture and facial features. While sex, race and ethnicity may all be social constructed and are in essence, "not real", their institutionalization in society creates major social ramifications that affect all people.

Transgender: A person who significantly transgresses the gender assigned to hir body at birth. This term may be used as an umbrella term that encompasses identities such as transsexual, cross-dresser, drag king/queen, genderqueer, etc. or it may be used as a personal identity.

Transsexual: A person who transgresses the sex assigned to hir body at birth. This is done by rejecting the sex category that was assigned to the individual upon birth. For example, someone who was pronounced to be male upon birth and later in life, rejects that claim and identifies as female or something else, can be seen as a transsexual (remember, sex is a category/identity and all identities/categories are socially constructed). Some transsexuals choose to modify their body through hormones and/or surgery. The most common transsexual identities are FTM (female-to-male) and MTF (male-to-female).

Crossdresser: A person who wears clothing associated with a gender identity other than what the person usually holds for himself.

Drag King/Queen: These terms are currently used in reference to stage/theater performers whose performances are centered on or around gender.

Genderqueer: A person who significantly transgresses the gender assigned to hir body at birth. This term became popular as increasing amounts of gender variant people voiced discomfort in and exclusion from the transgender community.

Intersex: A person who "is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male." (www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex)

Kathoey: Thailand. Usually refers to what Westerners might see to as a MTF or a feminine gay male. Is thought to have higher visibility and acceptance than their counterparts in Western societies.

Hijra: India/South Asia. Usually refers to people born with XY chromosomes and/or are intersex, and identify as belonging to a third sex. Usually referred to with the pronouns "she" and "her". Perform traditional religious ceremonies at marriages and births of male babies - believed to bring good luck and fertility.

Two-Spirit: Native American. People who would identified as being LGBTQ by Western culture. Created in 1990 in reference to the third and fourth genders that were institutionally recognized in many traditional Native American cultures.

Butch/Femme Queen: Common identities found in African-American and Latino queer communities and the Ball scene. "Queen" usually refers to queer males and individuals who have or are perceived as having XY chromosomes. The butch/femme is used to identify the person's gender identity. If the person identifies as male, regardless of gender expression, the person is identified as being butch. Femme is used in reference to pre and non-operative trans women.

GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS:

Ze - used in place of he or she. Pronounced like "z."

Hir - used in place of her, his and him. Pronounced like "here."

from <http://www.villagevoice.com/news/0209,wilchins,32645,1.html>

A Woman for Her Time
In Memory of Stonewall Warrior Sylvia Rivera
by Riki Wilchins
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She may have been the prototypical Angry Queen. Unbowed, unbought, and virtually indigestible by a gay movement she helped birth, Stonewall warrior Sylvia Rivera died on February 19 of end-stage liver disease aggravated by too many years on alcohol and city streets.

Sylvia (né Ray) was one of those outcast femmy boys and butchy girls she worried so much about, who worked the streets and too often ended up floating under the Christopher Street piers, overdosed on drugs or beaten half to death by fag bashers, strung-out tricks, lovers, or cops.

When genderqueers rioted at the Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969, it wasn't because the last jitney had just left for Fire Island. They took on the cops because their sanctuary had been invaded once too often, and, unwelcome at the city's tonier gay bars, they had few other places to call their own. Sylvia immediately understood the significance of their rebellion. She called Stonewall "the turning point," and she threw one of the first bottles at the cops.

A year later, Sylvia joined the new Gay Activists Alliance and began working furiously to pass a gay rights bill in New York City. She was even arrested for climbing the walls of City Hall in a dress and high heels to crash a closed-door meeting on the bill.

Yet, despite her heroic efforts, within a few years GAA had eliminated drag and transvestite (as they were then called) concerns from its civil rights agenda. Drag rights were also dropped from the proposed city gay rights bill to make it more acceptable. "When things started getting more mainstream," Sylvia told Michael Musto in a 1995 interview, "it was like, 'We don't need you no more.'" Her response was to do what she did best: fight back. "Hell hath no fury like a drag queen scorned," Sylvia warned.

With Marsha P. Johnson (the *P* stood for Pay It No Mind), she founded Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, or STAR, a radical group that did everything from marching to setting up crash pads as an alternative to the streets. Though Sylvia was herself frequently homeless, she spent the end of her life at Transy House, a direct descendant of the original STAR shelter. She lived to see the '90s protest group Transsexual Menace and, later on, the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA). In many ways, Sylvia was the Rosa Parks of the modern transgender movement, a term that was not even coined until two decades after Stonewall.

The earlier expulsion of transvestites by GAA was a harbinger of things to come. In 2002, butches, queens, fairies, high femmes, drag people, tomboys, and sissies have all but vanished from official gay discourse. They are rarely mentioned in the public pronouncements of major gay organizations. Federal gay rights legislation pending in Congress doesn't mention gender expression or identity, nor does the gay rights bill pending in Albany. In effect, gender has become the new "gay," the thing you don't talk about in polite or political company.

Although most gay groups have added "and gender identity" to their mission statements, in practice the application of this phrase is strictly confined to the rights of transsexual and transgender people. Yet a recent GenderPAC survey found that about a third of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals who experienced workplace discrimination reported that their problems were due to the perception that they transgressed gender norms. It seems unlikely that sexual orientation laws alone will protect such people, let alone heterosexuals or transgender employees who don't fit someone's ideal of "real" men or women.

When it comes to homosexuality, most gay organizations are determined to project an image of normalcy in which all gay men are Will Truman and all lesbians Ellen DeGeneres. Acknowledging anything less would be admitting that some gays and lesbians are people like . . . well, like Sylvia Rivera.

As they were 30 years ago, gender stereotypes are still the elephant in the living room, the political issue no one wants to tackle. So we have lesbians like 34-year old Dawn Dawson, who was fired from an upscale Manhattan hair salon allegedly for looking too butch; Fred Martinez Jr., a gay and transgender Navajo teen who was beaten to death in Cortez, Colorado; and Willie Houston, a 38-year old African American Metro bus driver in Nashville. Willie wasn't gay or trans or anything else except a frequent driver for the elderly and disabled. But a man became enraged at seeing him with a blind male friend on one arm and holding his girlfriend's purse on the other, and shot him dead on the night of his engagement.

Then there's the emerging issue of gender-based school bullying. Five of eight major school shootings involved assailants who reportedly had been taunted with sexual epithets. According to the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN), words like *faggot* and *gay* are often used interchangeably to demean boys by bullies who don't necessarily associate these epithets with sexual orientation. 'Sissy' boys and "tomboy" girls—whether they are gay, straight, or just genderqueer—are prime targets for abuse during those years when fitting in is the most important thing in an adolescent's life. Teenagers engage in gender profiling as if they were trained by the New Jersey State Highway Patrol. So it seems unlikely that we will prevent school bullying until we start addressing gender stereotyping.

Finding food, shelter, a safe bed, and even some recognition for genderqueer kids was a lifelong passion for Sylvia. She saw them as society's most vulnerable outcasts. She picketed and protested, caucused and cajoled, and if the occasion called for it, which it often did, she submitted to arrest.

Sylvia Rivera went out as she lived: struggling to get gender issues on the map. She was hooked up to monitors, IVs, and a morphine pump last Sunday when local gay leaders stopped by the intensive care unit to ask her advice. Mortally ill, she held back the night long enough to give them hell one last time for not being inclusive enough. She died only hours later, at just 50 years old: a unique lady for a unique time.

Funeral services for Sylvia Rivera will be held Tuesday, February 26, 7 p.m. at MCC Church 446 W. 36th St.

A memorial event for Sylvia Rivera is currently being planned. For information, e-mail j_vimo@hotmail.com.

Riki Wilchins is executive director of the Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC).