WHO AM I?

- Counseling psychologist
- Currently a lecturer at Boston University
- Specialize in therapy for LGBTQ+ individuals
- Identify as a white, cisgender, queer woman
AGENDA

• Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity Terminology
• Sexuality and Gender on a Spectrum: Gender Unicorn
• Gender Neutral Pronouns- What and Why?
  • TW: Suicide
• Questions
COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS FOR CREATING A SAFE LEARNING SPACE

• Respect for others
• Openness to new ideas/opinions
• Assuming good intention with questions (while recognizing that what we say has an impact on others)
• Practice imagining what it is like for others
IF YOU HAVE COME HERE TO HELP ME, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME. BUT IF YOU HAVE COME BECAUSE YOUR LIBERATION IS BOUND UP WITH MINE, THEN LET US WORK TOGETHER.

Attributed to Lilla Watson; Collective belief Aboriginal activists in Australia
Reflect on your earliest memories of gender…

• What do you recall?
• How do your memories vary across age?
• What messages about gender did you receive from others or society?
• How did this impact your understanding of gender?
**SEX V. GENDER**

- **Sex**—identified by visual observation of genitals at birth and designated ‘male,’ ‘female,’ or ‘intersex’

- **Gender**—identified internally by self-knowledge and understanding and falling somewhere in the spectrum including masculinity, femininity, androgyny, and other terms

Source: The Fenway Institute
Gender is a social construct

- Gender is what we do, not who we are

- Society is structured around a gender binary, and has been so for so long, and so completely that this binary appears natural

Major Queer Theorists: Judith Butler, David Halperin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Kate Bornstein
## SEXUAL ORIENTATION TERMS 101

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| **GAY/HOMOSEXUAL** | • Someone who is romantically/sexually attracted to the same sex. It is often used to refer to men who are attracted to men, but sometimes used to describe women who are attracted to women.  
**Homosexual is considered a derogatory/medicalized term by some, especially older gay men.** |
| **LESBIAN**      | • A woman who is romantically/sexually attracted to women. “Same gender loving woman” (SGL) is sometimes used in the African-American community.                                                                   |
| **STRAIGHT/HETEROSEXUAL** | • Refers to women who are romantically/sexually attracted to men, and men who are attracted to women.                                                                                                           |
### SEXUAL ORIENTATION TERMS 101 (CONT.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>QUEER</strong></th>
<th><strong>BISEXUAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>PANSEXUAL</strong></th>
<th><strong>ASEXUAL</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Historically a derogatory term for gay individuals, this word is now used positively by many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and allies. It is sometimes used to describe an open, fluid sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression.</td>
<td>• A person who is romantically/sexually attracted to multiple genders—sometimes, though not necessarily, at the same time. <strong>Bisexuals are often mislabeled as confused, or not ‘gay’ enough; people who identify as bi have often been stigmatized.</strong></td>
<td>• A person who is attracted to people across the range of genders. Often used by those who identify as transgender or genderqueer or who are attracted to people who are transgender or genderqueer.</td>
<td>• A person who does not experience sexual attraction ever, or for a period of time; “ace”</td>
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GENDER DIVERSITY TERMS 101

**Assigned Sex at Birth**
- The sex classification a child is given at birth, usually based upon external anatomy. Individuals are usually Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB) or Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB).

**Male-to-Female (MtF)/Female-to-Male (FtM)**
- These terms were common self-descriptors for binary transgender individuals (i.e. MtF is a transgender woman transitioning from her assigned sex of ‘male’ to her identified gender of ‘female’).
- Today these terms have fallen out of favor as individuals move towards an understanding of gender that is less pathologized and centered around medical transition, however these terms are still in use by some.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>TRANSGENDER</strong></th>
<th><strong>GENDER NONCONFORMING</strong></th>
<th><strong>GENDERQUEER</strong></th>
<th><strong>CISGENDER</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • An umbrella term referring to people whose gender identity and/or gender expression does not fit their sex assigned at birth. Groups often included under the transgender umbrella are individuals who identify as genderqueer, androgynous, and people who identify as more than one gender.  
• Often shortened to trans* | • A person whose gender expression is neither clearly feminine nor clearly masculine, or does not conform to mainstream society’s expectations of gender roles  
• Similar terms: Non-binary, gender fluid | • A person who blurs, rejects or otherwise transgresses traditional gender norms; also used as a term for someone who rejects the binary two-gender system. | • Identifying with the gender assigned to you at birth (aka non-transgender) |
### BEING READ
- How one’s gender is perceived socially by those around you based on factors such as primary & secondary sex characteristics, dress, mannerisms, etc.

### PASSING
- Accurate recognition of and reflection of one’s gender expression by others

### STEALTH
- Choice not to disclose one’s medical history including sex assigned at birth and gender affirmation treatments

### DEADNAMING
- The practice of uttering or publishing the name that a trans person used prior to transition

### ADDITIONAL TRANS* TERMINOLOGY
Can encompass any individual who crosses over or challenges their society’s traditional gender roles and/or expression.

- male to female (mtf)
- female-to-male (ftm)
- agender
- genderqueer
- third gender
- non-binary
- intersex
- drag
- queen
- king
- two spirit
- androgynous

Adapted from Kerry Pointer, Duke University (2007)
SEXUAL ORIENTATION V. GENDER IDENTITY

• Many people confuse sexual orientation with gender identity.

• Gender identity is about who we are, while sexual orientation is about who we are attracted to.

• Your gender identity DOES NOT predict your sexual orientation.
  • Being cisgender or transgender does not, for example, predict whether a woman will be straight, bisexual, or lesbian.
**Sex, Gender, & Sexuality:**

- Different yet interrelated
- Culturally dependent
- Contextually dependent
YOU CAN COMPLETE YOUR OWN GENDER UNICORN!

• After this training, I encourage you all to explore your own identities by completing the Gender Unicorn
  • Mark where you identify on each of the categories

• You can reflect on…
  • What did you observe about yourself?
  • Psychologically, how did you know these things about yourself? What part of yourself did you access?
  • How does this help you understand gender?
Gender neutral (or gender inclusive) pronoun:

- A pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being discussed.
Pronouns-- A How To Guide

Subject: ____ laughed at the notion of a gender binary.

Object: They tried to convince ____ that asexuality does not exist.

Possessive: ____ favorite color is unknown.

Possessive Pronoun: The pronoun card is ____.

Reflexive: ____ thinks highly of ____.

The pronoun list on the reverse is not an exhaustive list. It is good practice to ask which pronouns a person uses.

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<td>zie</td>
<td>zim</td>
<td>zir</td>
<td>zirs</td>
<td>zirself</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
FUTURE PRONOUN PRACTICE

• Spend some time “people watching” (pick a stranger on the street/at a park/in a coffee shop or restaurant)

• First, notice the assumptions you make about their gender

• In your thoughts, practice talking about them using “they/them” pronouns (or pronouns that are different from what you assume is their gender)
DEBUNKING TRANSGENDER MYTHS
MYTH 1

**MYTH:**
It’s easy to tell when someone is transgender

**FACT:**
Just like all people, transgender individuals look and express themselves in many different ways. You CANNOT tell if a person is transgender by how they look.
MYTH 2

MYTH:
Everyone who is transgender undergoes a physical transition

FACT:
• A 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey found about 2/3 of TGNC respondents medically transitioned and 1/3 surgically transitioned. About 14% of trans women and 72% of trans men say they never want full genital construction surgery
• You DO NOT need to physically transition to be transgender
MYTH: Being transgender is relatively new

FACT: Transgender individuals are documented in many indigenous, Western, and Eastern cultures since antiquity.

https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/transgender
MYTH 4

MYTH: People in Massachusetts are generally not transphobic

FACT: From the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, Massachusetts State Report, transgender respondents reported in the last year...

- 23% reported being mistreated in their workplace due to their gender identity
- 73% of students K-12 who were perceived as transgender experienced mistreatment
- 20% experienced homelessness (20% of those individuals avoided staying in a shelter due to fears of being mistreated as a transgender person)
- 33% limited how much they ate/drank to avoid using the restroom
- 52% who interacted with police reported being mistreated based on their gender identity
- 31% reported at least one negative experience with a healthcare provider
Mean age of awareness that one is trans* = 13.4
Family rejection or non-affirmation of trans child associated with increased rates of:
• Suicidality, attempt and self-harm
• Depression & Anxiety
• Eating Disorders
• Substance use disorders & tobacco use
• Unprotected sex and rates of HIV transmission
• Homelessness, placement in foster care system
• Involvement in juvenile justice system

Data from HRC.org
RATES OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

• Over 50% of transgender male teens
• 30% of transgender female teens
• 42% of non-binary youth

USING SOMEONE’S PREFERRED NAME AND PRONOUNS IS SUICIDE PREVENTION

Data from HRC.org
HOW TO AVOID ANY TERMS THAT WOULD INDICATE GENDER

• “How may I help you, miss?” → “How may I help you?”
• “Alright boys and girls, it’s story time!” → “Alright everyone, it’s story time!”
• “He is here to meet with Meghan” → “Meghan’s 3pm meeting is here”

Adapted from: The Fenway Institute
RESOURCES

• Fenway Health: https://fenwayhealth.org/
  https://www.lgbtqiahealtheducation.org/

• Human Rights Campaign: https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender

• American Psychological Association: https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq