

# CREATING AN LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE CAMPUS:

A Guidebook prepared by the Campus Coordinated Response Team on Trauma-Informed, Culturally Sensitive and Inclusive Teaching for LGBTQ+ Students at USC.

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The project is supported through a grant from the California Office of Emergency Services.

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# INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this guidebook is to provide USC educators with the resources necessary to create effective and safe learning environments for gender and sexual minority students and support them in addressing any gender and power-based harm that these students have experienced while at USC.

## **CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES (CAL OES)**

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) is a state agency that administers numerous programs that support stakeholders, protect communities, and help create a resilient California. It provided funding to USC to address LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and other queer identities) sexual violence and gender-based harm on a campus-wide level. As a part of this grant, the Campus Coordinated Response Team (CCRT) was created, which consists of USC staff, faculty, and students, along with other community stakeholders and organizations as partners to work together to address these issues at all possible levels.

## **USC CAMPUS COORDINATED RESPONSE TEAM (CCRT)**

The USC Campus Coordinated Response Team (CCRT) is an initiative under the auspices of Student Health and the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX (EEO-TIX) and charged to develop a coordinated response to sexual and relationship violence within the campus community. The mandate of the CCRT is to:

1. Address sexual and relationship violence which requires campus-wide recognition of the serious impact these types of violence have on campus communities and support from the highest levels of campus leadership.
2. Address the need for appropriate funding and resources to be allocated to support comprehensive prevention and response.

3. Engage faculty, staff, administrators, and students who must promote and model respect, equity, and mutuality to build a campus climate of safety for everyone.

The CCRT will ensure that all USC departments are trauma-informed and culturally responsive to our student populations, and reflective of the need to be inclusive, respectful and helpful.

The CCRT convened a Sub-Committee on Education and Training to establish priorities for education and training on sexual violence and gender-based harm for the campus community. Formative research among key stakeholders and students at USC identified the need for further training and resources for faculty. The members of the Sub-Committee collaborated with student representatives to develop this guidebook. Focus group discussions were held with students to gain their feedback and further refine the guidebook. The draft was then reviewed and approved by leaders from the Student Health Center, the EEO-TIX office, The LGBTQ+ Student Center, and Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP).

## **TRAUMA-INFORMED FRAMEWORK**

Trauma-informed (TI) universities have trained everyone on the campus to recognize, acknowledge and respond to trauma from “a universal precaution model”, which means to incorporate a trauma-informed lens into the pedagogy and service delivery models since it is unknown which students have a trauma history. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) acknowledges the likelihood that a majority of college students experience at least one traumatic event during childhood (see [Appendix D](#) for more on this study). Trauma-informed approaches integrate social justice and cultural responsiveness into all aspects of college services and teaching. All students are treated with respect, compassion, flexibility and support using their culture as a context

# INTRODUCTION



for understanding their lived experiences. This TI approach includes working to eradicate institutional and individual power-based harm. This approach is not antithetical to academic rigor, but upholds that value in the institution.

## TRAUMA INFORMED PEDAGOGY

The University of Southern California defines excellence in teaching as embracing and valuing the diversity in students' learning experiences and following guidelines of Universal Design for Learning framework, a science and evidence-based educational practice that assumes that barriers to learning are in the environmental design. Read more here: [CET](#).

Additionally, the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) requires educators to establish and maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment for LGBTQ+ members of the USC community. Therefore, to promote academic success and the well-being of all students, including LGBTQ+ students, educators need to practice trauma-informed critical pedagogy and focus on identifying social inequalities and oppressive power struggles in and outside of the classroom.

## IMPORTANCE OF SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS AT USC

Research has shown that trauma and toxic stress resulting from prolonged harassment, discrimination, and other types of adverse experiences can impede cognitive functioning and academic performance. These negative effects on academic performance disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ students due to their heightened rates of violence and victimization throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Kosciw et al., 2012; Aragon et al., 2014; Wimberly, 2015; Parker et al., 2019)

According to data from the **2019 AAU Campus Climate on Sexual Assault and Misconduct Survey** and the **2020 USC Student Wellbeing Index Survey (SWIS)**, LGBTQ+ students make up

about 20% of the USC student population and experience higher rates of sexual harassment and assault than cisgender (a person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth), heterosexual students. USC LGBTQ+ students also responded that they are treated less fair and equitable by faculty in comparison to non-LGBTQ+ students. Transgender or gender non-conforming students feel even more discriminated. You can find the [AAU](#) and [SWIS](#) data by clicking the survey links.

When it comes to LGBTQ+ students specifically, an inclusive learning environment begins with educators engaging in self-reflection to understand how discrimination and lack of representation in the classroom creates barriers to the academic success of their students. Ally-ship is an ongoing effort that involves fostering trusting relationships with systematically marginalized groups, unlearning harmful ideologies and practices, and leveraging one's own privilege in support of the marginalized.

Below are action items for educators to foster supportive learning environments for LGBTQ+ students, incorporating ways to include positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, and events in curriculum.

# TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOMS

Include elements that support a trauma-informed classroom environment (Lehr, 2018):

1. **Predictability:** Establish and maintain clear expectations, demonstrating dependability, and giving students advance notice of changes. Build off your college/university policies that are clear and implement them consistently. Avoid surprises and disappointment.
2. **Communication:** Open various channels of communication (office hours, frequent emailing, anonymous question/suggestion box) for students and members of the learning community to ask for what they need.
  - At the beginning of each semester ask students if there is anything they would like you to know that would help them have a better educational experience in the class or help you to understand them better.
3. **Resources:** Update syllabi to include information on trauma, campus resources, coping tips, etc. Take the time to discuss these items in the syllabus with students at the beginning of each class term.
4. **Anticipatory Guidance:** Give a content warning to students before discussing any potentially sensitive or activating materials and emphasize their use of coping skills, e.g., needing to excuse themselves during the presentation, grounding activities, etc.
5. **Self-care:** Make time to take care of yourself, reflect on your own trauma history and its impact on your teaching or educational experiences. Consult with other campus programs or colleagues when you encounter a particularly challenging student.
6. **Flexibility:** Consider strategies that reduce stress and emphasize learning, e.g. reducing the number of assignments or readings, making some assignments optional or complete/incomplete, dropping lowest scores, using self-care coupons, or general extensions.
7. **Prioritize:** If everything is important, nothing is important. Let students know what is most essential to read, do, remember, revise, etc.
8. **Feedback:** Strategies such as assignment scaffolding and regular check-ins help improve learning and reduce stress for students and instructors.



# COURSE DOCUMENTATION

Include statements on diversity, respecting pronouns and non-discriminatory language in your syllabus. Set a tone of acceptance in the classroom and offer to be a support resource for students if they experience discrimination in other aspects of the University, consistent with your Designated Employee responsibilities under University policies designed to also support students, including USC community members.

### SAMPLE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION SYLLABUS LANGUAGE

Feel free to use these examples in your syllabus. However, please note that the language should be tailored to the unique needs, environment, and relevant subject matter of your classroom.

- **Diversity/Inclusivity Statement:**

*I am committed to creating an inclusive environment in which all students are respected and valued. I will not tolerate disrespectful language or behavior on the basis of age, ability, color, ethnicity, race, gender identity or expression, pregnancy/marital/parental status, military/veteran's status, national origin, political belief or affiliation, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or any other protected characteristics, nor based on other visible or non-visible differences. I expect the same from you. We are here to learn with and from one another. It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure that our classroom space, and the university as a whole, is a safe and inclusive environment that facilitates learning. We may touch on topics that some students feel sensitive about during class. If you find yourself having an emotional response, please reach out to me.*

*I intend to create an equitable and inclusive learning environment that recognizes, respects, supports, and affirms the diversity of identities, backgrounds, and experiences that we all hold. I expect that you assist in co-creating this environment with me and for each other."*

*"We can disagree and still love each other, unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist." – JAMES BALDWIN*

### SAMPLE LANGUAGE FROM EEO-TIX

Suggested syllabus language that explains how students can request academic accommodations and how to explain a faculty member's Designated Employee responsibilities can be found on the EEO-TIX website under the [Sample Syllabus Language](#) tab. Be sure to discuss your role as a Designated Employee with your students on the first day of classes.





# CLASSROOM INTRODUCTIONS

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRONOUNS

We use people's pronouns and names frequently and in regular, every day communication, both verbally and in writing. Pronouns stand in for someone's name in a sentence. For example, "He wore his red shirt today. Can you see him?" Or, "They wore their red shirt today. Can you see them?" Every student has the right to be respected and referred to by their name and pronouns that correspond to their gender. Below are some examples of pronouns. This list is not exhaustive; see [Appendix](#) to learn more about pronouns and neopronouns.

Table 1

SUBJECT	OBJECT	POSSESSIVE
They	Them	Theirs
She	Her	Hers
He	Him	His
<b>Neopronouns</b> can be a word created to serve as a pronoun without expressing gender, like "ze" and "zir."		
Per	Per	Pers
Ze	Hir	His
Xe	Xem	Xyrs
Some people don't want to use pronouns at all and will ask you to refer to them by their name alone. (These can also be referred to as "noun-self pronouns" in the appendix)		

### [What are Gender Pronouns? Why Do They Matter? | Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(nih.gov\)](#)

- 1. Introduce yourself with your pronouns on the first day of class.** Invite your students to introduce themselves with their name and the pronouns they use in that space (if they are comfortable). It also may be helpful to explain what gender pronouns are and why you share yours.
  - Encourage students to add pronouns to Zoom usernames if teaching virtually.
  - Have your pronouns visible across all platforms your class will use (syllabus, email signature, Zoom username, etc.).
- 2. If your class is small enough to get to know each other,** make sure to provide students an opportunity to introduce themselves and their pronouns.
  - When first meeting a student, avoid using gendered terms until you are sure of the student's gender.
  - Let students share their name with you, instead of defaulting to a student's legal name in their records.



# ACTION ITEMS



## CLASSROOM INTRODUCTIONS (continued)

- During roll call, you can call off last names and ask students to share their first names.  
*If the name a student shares with you differs from their legal name or paperwork, be sure not to label it a “nickname.”*
- Ask for a student’s pronouns, versus relying on the student roster, since the default pronoun in the Grading and Roster System are *they/them* pronouns.
- Avoid assuming a student’s pronouns or gender—clothing or other aspects of a student’s appearance are not automatic indicators of a student’s gender or pronouns.
- Ask everyone about pronouns or gender identity, not just if you perceive the student’s gender as ambiguous, androgynous, etc.

### 3. Use the language a person designates for themselves.

- Once a student shares their name and pronouns, proceed using only that name and the pronouns they provided. Consider asking the student if they are comfortable with you sharing their name and pronouns with others with whom the student interacts, such as TAs or other professors in your department.
- If you accidentally misgender a student, apologize, correct your language, and move on. Over apologizing and dwelling on the mistake can cause more harm and forces the student to put more effort into addressing your emotional response.
- Correct other faculty, staff, and students if misgendering occurs (with the consent of the person who was misgendered) to ensure LGBTQ+ students’ identities are respected.
- If you observe someone persistently misgendering a student after being aware of their pronouns, report that information to the EEO-TIX office as a Designated Employee.

### 4. Take time to set classroom expectations to make sure that everyone in the classroom is feeling respected and heard. For classes that may not normally discuss power, privilege, and oppression, it is very important for educators to be explicit about their support so that students can feel reassured that your classroom is a safe environment

- Ex: “At any point throughout the course, please feel free to share with me if you would like me (and your classmates) to address you in a different way - I will not tolerate misgendering and disrespect of people’s identities, as indicated by their names and pronouns in our classroom.”
- For additional information on how to set classroom expectations, refer to the [First Day of Class resource](#) developed by USC Center for Excellence in Teaching

### 5. If the class is held in-person, inform students where they can find the nearest bathrooms, including gender-inclusive bathrooms. List out all the options so the students can choose which one they would like to use. You can find the list of all gender inclusive bathrooms at USC-UPC campus [here](#).

# LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

Queer identities are underrepresented both in classroom materials and the numbers of LGBTQ+ individuals in the field. LGBTQ+ students rarely see positive representations of themselves in classrooms. A 2019 national survey of K-12 LGBTQ+ students reported that only about one in five students were taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events in the classroom while 17% reported negative content about LGBTQ topics were taught (Kosciw et al., 2020).

1. **Use precise terms** like Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) rather than using “homosexual” or “gay” as an umbrella term.
2. **Find opportunities to normalize and include** they/them pronouns, neopronouns, and non-heterosexual/non-cisgender relationships. This can be implemented across all academic fields.
  - For example, when writing a hypothetical medical case study involving individuals in a relationship, you can use they/ them pronouns and refer to them as “partners” instead of saying “boyfriend” and “girlfriend”.
  - Other gender neutral terms include: parent, child, sibling, -person/-officer, and so on.
  - Keep in mind that examples referencing male/female/man/woman typically include stereotypes or heteronormative generalizations, unless it is a statistic or regarding biology.
  - Remember that sexuality is not just the heterosexual/homosexual binary: some other sexualities include bisexuality, pansexuality, and asexuality. [See Appendix B.](#)
3. **If anyone tries to debate LGBTQ+ identities or experiences** as hypothetical talking points (i.e. playing the devil’s advocate), remind them of the classroom expectations. Remind your students not to occupy other people’s presumed positionalities and encourage them to reflect on whose life experiences get stereotyped, left out, or marginalized.
4. **When discussing LGBTQ+ identities or experiences**, do not expect your LGBTQ+ students to participate and speak for an entire group. They might also be uncomfortable discussing their identities academically.
5. **Avoid heteronormative language that assumes** the heterosexuality and cisgender identities of your students. Don’t make assumptions that students are in heterosexual relationships, even for examples that are intended to be “funny” (e.g. “Boys, would you do this for your girlfriend?”) and challenge such assumptions if students raise them.
6. **Do not make assumptions.** Remember that not everyone identifies as a man or a woman and not everyone identifies as straight or heterosexual.
7. **Avoid stereotypical language** in discussing LGBTQ+ people and experiences.
8. **Recognize and discuss specific LGBTQ+ days of significance as they arise.** A list of these days can be found in the [Appendix](#).
9. **When appropriate for course content, encourage classes/students to participate in LGBTQ+ campus events/activities.**

# COURSE MATERIALS

Given that students' first introduction to professionals within their field of interest often occurs within the classroom, course readings or other materials written or produced by an LGBTQ+ individual can be highlighted and celebrated in course curricula. Not only does this offer LGBTQ+ students visibility and representation and shows that they too can be successful in their field, but it also promotes a culture of diversity and inclusion among these students' non-LGBTQ+ colleagues (QEDU, 2017).

Incorporating LGBTQ+ identities into your materials will look different in each field, but it is critical to acknowledge that LGBTQ+ identities have relevance and impact in different ways in all fields. If you are struggling to identify specific ways to incorporate LGBTQ+ identities into your discipline, consider the following:

- 1. Use multiple and diverse examples** even when those identities are not the focus of the discussion. Multiple examples increase the likelihood of students relating to at least one of them. Take care to include examples that speak to multiple genders and that work across cultures.
- 2. If your course provides reading assignments,** have at least one required reading item in the coursework involving LGBTQ+ contributors or themes. If you are inviting guest speakers, consider LGBTQ+ professionals in your field which can be found in the [Appendix](#).
- 3. You may already be striving to improve gender diversity** in your classroom by including representation of cisgender women. You may be able to employ similar strategies to expand gender diversity to include representation of transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming identities, including intersections with other identities, such as race, ethnicity, etc. (e.g., Black trans women).
- 4. Some academic subjects may already include content** that is relevant to LGBTQ+ identities without realizing.
  - For example, a biology or chemistry class could incorporate information about transgender healthcare when teaching about the use of synthetic hormones. Think about your current curriculum and think about how it may apply to the lives of LGBTQ+ identities.

When topics are taught without context and/or are positioned in such a way that they fail to connect to the big ideas of the topic being studied, such as when LGBTQ+ themes are only introduced during LGBTQ+ History Month (October) or LGBTQ+ Pride Month (June), this is considered curricular “fragmentation” or “isolation.” Additional fragmentation occurs when educators include only lesbians or gay men to the exclusion of bisexual and transgender people, or when lessons fail to represent ethnic, racial, and other forms of diversity that exist among LGBTQ+ individuals.

Because of historical erasure and suppression of information that validates LGBTQ+ identities, some generally accepted and highly regarded academic materials may still include outdated language and harmful misconceptions about LGBTQ+ identities. Some of the language and norms you have been taught and have been using in your classroom may be harmful or outdated as well. For example, intersex and transgender individuals are historically seen as fringe cases or outliers that can be ignored in class. Review your materials and reflect on whether the language and facts about LGBTQ+ identities are up to date.

# SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ STUDENTS IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

1. **Familiarize yourself with campus resources for LGBTQ+ students**, including support systems and information on how to report discriminatory or inappropriate conduct in the classroom. See [Appendix C](#).
2. **Do not assume that all students** have conventional housing circumstances, family support, financial stability, or access to necessary medical care. This is for all students, not just LGBTQ+ students.
3. **If issues related to LGBTQ+ identities or experiences are discussed** in and out of your classroom, be mindful of the emotional impact it may have on your students.
4. **If a student expresses a desire to be involved in LGBTQ+ spaces** but is unsure of what is available, they can be referred to the [LGBTQ+ Student Center](#) for more information.
5. **Research if there are any school-specific student organizations** in your field that could support those students.
6. **If a student needs support for matters outside of your class**, refer them to support services so they can receive professional care. See [Appendix C](#).
7. **If a student discloses a concern**, keep that information private. If a student is sharing their experiences with prohibited conducts, including gender or sex discrimination caused by another professor, persistent misgendering, and refusal to use chosen name, inform students of your responsibility to report and provide additional support. Learn more about Prohibited Conduct and how to report to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX). See [Appendix C](#).
  - **Sample response:**

*“I’m sorry this happened to you and thank you for trusting me with something deeply personal to you. As part of my responsibility as a University employee, I need to contact the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) to share with them the information you have provided, as it relates to protected class concerns. This is to ensure that both you and the community are safe and supported, and to make sure you have information about available support resources and*



## ACTION ITEMS



### SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ STUDENTS IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM (continued)

*reporting options so that you can make informed choices. This does not mean that you are in trouble or that you will have to go through an investigation. EEO-TIX can go over your reporting options and supportive measures available to you. It is your choice whether to engage with EEO-TIX or the resources they share with you. Is there anything else I can do to support you?"*

**8. If you received feedback from students that your class is not gender-inclusive,** take time to reflect on your behaviors, attitudes, cognitive biases, and curriculums.

- Intellectual humility refers to characteristics that allow room for admission of wrongness. It is okay for you to admit to not know everything about being gender-inclusive or to understand what LGBTQ+ experiences are like.
- Remind yourself that this is an opportunity for you to learn and grow. When someone offers you criticism, think of it as an indication of trust; that person believes that you can be better.
- Show gratitude, openness, and repair.

**Sample response:**

*"Thank you for sharing that with me. It's hard to hear. And I appreciate you trust me enough to share this feedback." Then say, "I am sorry that what I said and did was offensive."*

- Ask for their input and showcase your willingness to change.

**Sample response:**

*"I care a lot about creating an inclusive classroom, and I want to improve. If you're willing, I welcome recommendations for how I could make my classrooms more gender-inclusive?"*

*If you didn't quite grasp how or why your behaviors were not gender-inclusive, it is okay to take time to learn more. But you should not make your students teach you. Research the questions you might have, or ask other educators for support. There are also many University resources to support you in growing and learning, such as RSVP, the EEO-TIX office, the LGBTQ+ Student Center, Center for Teaching and Excellence, and the Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer.*

# APPENDIX



## A. LGBTQ+ FIELD CONTRIBUTORS AND DAYS OF LGBTQ+ SIGNIFICANCE

The following tables include information about LGBTQ+ contributors to the Arts, Social Sciences, and STEM fields. This list is not in any way exhaustive; it is intended to serve as a starting point for educators to identify significant LGBTQ+ field contributors. In order to identify LGBTQ+ individuals with contributions that suit your interests, course subject, and lesson plans, you will need to conduct further research and reading. We strongly encourage educators to think about intersectionality when highlighting LGBTQ+ field contributors.

Database of field contributors, days of significance, and additional terms can be found in this [LGBTQ+ Field Contributors & Days of LGBTQ+ Significance table](#).

## B. LGBTQ+ TERMINOLOGY

As we continue to learn about ourselves and our LGBTQ+ community, it's important to remember that the language we use to describe our identities and experiences is constantly evolving, and it is imperative that allies continue to learn and shift their language accordingly. Much of the vocabulary and terminology are largely adapted from Trans Student Educational Resources (TSER). Please [visit their page](#) to learn more.

**Agender:** An adjective used to describe people who do not have a gender identity (i.e., lack of gender identity) (*e.g., agender person*).

**Ally:** Someone who advocates and supports a community other than their own. Allies are not part of the communities they help. A person should not self-identify as an ally but show that they are one through action. Someone that believes that heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are social justice issues. Someone who confronts heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexual and cisgender privilege in themselves and others. Someone who has concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex people.

**Aromantic:** An adjective used to describe people who do not experience romantic attraction (*e.g., aromantic person*).

**Asexual:** An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction (*e.g., asexual person*). (For more information, visit [asexuality.org](#)).

**Attraction/Orientation:** There are many different types of attraction/orientation: sexual, romantic, aesthetic, sensual, emotional, intellectual, and more.



# APPENDIX



## *Sexual/Physical Orientation:*

- *A person's physical, aesthetic, and/or other forms of attraction to others. In Western cultures, gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Trans people can be straight, bisexual, lesbian, gay, asexual, pansexual, queer, etc. just like anyone else. For example, a trans-woman who is exclusively attracted to other women would often identify as lesbian.*

## *Emotional/Romantic Orientation:*

- *Describes an individual's pattern of romantic attraction based on a person's gender(s) regardless of one's sexual orientation. For individuals who experience sexual attraction, their sexual orientation and romantic orientation are often in alignment (i.e. they experience sexual attraction toward individuals of the same gender(s) as the individuals they are interested in forming romantic relationships with).*

**Bisexual/bi+:** An adjective used to describe people whose enduring emotional, physical, romantic, and/ or sexual attractions are to people of the same, other, or more than one gender (e.g., *bisexual person, bisexual woman*). These attractions can vary in degree and may be different over time.

**Cisgender/cis:** A term for someone who exclusively identifies with their sex assigned at birth. The term cisgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life. A cisgender person is not transgender.

**Gay:** The adjective used to describe people whose enduring emotional, physical, romantic, and/ or sexual attractions are to people of the same gender (e.g., *gay man, gay people*). Often

lesbian (noun or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.

**Gender Expression/Presentation:** The physical/ external manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. (typically referred to as masculine, feminine, or androgynous). Many transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth. Someone with a gender nonconforming gender expression may or may not be transgender. Gender presentation may not match gender identity or pronoun use and all combinations are valid and should be respected.

**Gender Identity:** One's internal sense of being a woman, man, neither of these, both, or other genders: how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. Everyone has a gender identity, including you. For transgender people, their gender assigned at birth and their gender identity are not necessarily the same. Pronouns are not always indicative of a person's gender.

**Heterosexism:** Describes the system of discriminatory beliefs, attitudes, and practices that are in favor of heterosexual identities and relationships. This ideology assumes that heterosexual identities and relationships are the norm and are of higher worth than non-heterosexual identities and relationships. Assuming that somebody is straight until they express otherwise is rooted in heterosexism.

**Intersex:** An umbrella term (adjective) describing a person with a less common combination of hormones, chromosomes, and/or anatomy that are used to assign sex at birth. There are many



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examples such as Klinefelter Syndrome, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia. Parents and medical professionals usually coercively assign intersex infants a sex and have, in the past, been medically permitted to perform surgical operations to conform the infant's genitalia to that assignment. This practice has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults speak out against the practice. The term intersex is not interchangeable with or a synonym for transgender (although some intersex people do identify as transgender). The definition of intersex can vary by country and culture and students should be believed when they indicate they are intersex.

**Lesbian:** The adjective used to describe people (most often women aligned, but not exclusively) who's enduring emotional, physical, romantic, and/or sexual attraction is to other women (or women aligned people). Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.), or as gay women. The term lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island of Lesbos and as such is sometimes considered a Eurocentric category that does not necessarily represent the identities of African-Americans and other non-European ethnic groups. This being said, women from diverse ethnic groups, including African-Americans, embrace the term 'lesbian' as an identity label.

**LGBTQIAPP+:** A collection of identities short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, agender/aromantic/asexual (these are three distinct identities), pansexual, polysexual (sometimes abbreviated to LGBT or LGBTQ+). Sometimes this acronym is replaced with "queer." The "+" signifies that this is a non-exhaustive list and that there are many more identities within the LGBTQIAPP+ community/acronym.

*The term "Ally" is not included in this acronym.*

**Name as pronouns/Noun-self:** An alternative to the use of pronouns that is sometimes used by people who do not relate to any pronouns.

*The use of a name instead of pronouns should be at the request of the person and not as a tool to avoid gendering someone the way they ask you to with pronouns.*

**Neopronouns:** Less common pronouns other than the more traditional "he/him/his", "she/her/hers", and "they/them/theirs". A few examples include: ze/hir/hirs, ae/aer/aers, and xe/xem/xyrs.

*Neopronouns have been a part of LGBTQ+ history for decades and can also be more common based on region).*

Learn more in this [BBC News article on neopronouns](#).

*Examples:*

- *Angel asked for assistance at the library since ze couldn't find the book ze needed.*
- *Xe ran for the bus after realizing xe left xyr laptop on it.*
- *Jamie likes to grab ice cream with aer teammates after swim practice.*

**Nonbinary (Also Non-Binary):** An umbrella term for all gender identities that do not lie within the gender binary (man or woman), used as an adjective (e.g. *Jesse is a nonbinary person*). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Some nonbinary folks use pronouns other than the binary he/him and she/her, such as they/them or ze/hir (pronounced "zee" and "heer"). Additionally, nonbinary individuals may have gender presentations of any kind.

- *Some nonbinary individuals use the shortened "enby" as a label but not all are*

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*comfortable with this language. “NB” is not appropriate as a shorthand spelling because it has historical significance as non-black in race conversations.*

- *In the state of California, nonbinary is recognized as a “legal administrative gender” and can be used in administrative and legal documents like birth certificates and driver’s licenses.*

**Pansexual:** An adjective used to describe people who experience emotional, physical, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to people of many/any/all gender(s). “Pansexual” is being used more and more frequently as more people acknowledge that gender is not binary. Pansexual can also be used to indicate attraction that is not based on gender.

**Polyamorous:** Characterized by or involved in the practice of engaging in multiple romantic (and typically sexual) relationships, with the consent of all the people involved.

**Pronouns:** The words we use to refer to someone in place of the person’s name. He/him/his and she/her/hers are often referred to as “masculine” and “feminine” pronouns, respectively. However, it should be noted that pronouns do not necessarily signify a person’s gender. For example, someone who uses he/him/his pronouns may not identify as a man. They/them/theirs is a gender-neutral pronoun that, while can be used to refer to multiple people, can also be used to refer to a singular person. Some people may use multiple pronouns interchangeably or none at all. The use of singular they dates back to 1375.

**Queer:** An umbrella term (adjective) for people of marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations who are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. There is a lot of overlap between queer and trans identities, but not all queer people are trans and not all trans people are queer. This term has a complicated history as a reclaimed slur and is not universally accepted by all LGBTQ+ people.

*Some people identify as queer but not “LGBTQ+” or “as an LGBTQ+ person.”*

**Questioning:** An adjective to describe an individual who is unsure about their sexual orientation/identity and/or gender identity. Some questioning people may not want to adhere to a label that does not designate how they feel. They may be in a process of exploration and/or concerned about applying a label to themselves.

**Sex Assigned At Birth:** The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex assigned at birth often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or karyotyping (i.e. chromosomes). Learn more [here](#).

**Transgender/Trans:** The encompassing umbrella term for those who do not identify or exclusively identify with their sex assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life. Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end, and that trans acts as an adjective like “trans man”.

*Some trans folks use pronouns other than the binary he/him and she/her, such as they/them or ze/hir (pronounced “zee” and “heer”). Some trans people interpret trans to be indicative of some sort of transition but this meaning is not assumed by all and no types of transition should be expected.*

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## C. RESOURCES

As an educator, you do not have to know answers to every situation that your students might find themselves in. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is connect them to the experts and resources they may find helpful.

### Campus Resources

**LGBTQ+ Student Center:** <https://lgbtqplus.usc.edu/>

The LGBTQ+ Student Center (LGBTQ+SC; est. 2005 as the LGBT Resource Center) is one of seven identity-based centers housed under Student Equity & Inclusion Programs (SEIP) in the Division of Student Affairs. The mission of the LGBTQ+SC is to provide support, education, advocacy, and community for all undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Southern California with an emphasis on students across the spectra of gender and sexuality. In carrying out its mission, the LGBTQ+SC is committed to engaging in its pillars of support, education, advocacy, and community by programming across the multiple intersections of identities within the diverse LGBTQ+ community, collaborating with its SEIP and university partners, and fostering intentional identity development and leadership development for USC students.

3601 Trousdale Parkway, STU 415

Los Angeles, CA 90089-0890

**T:** 213.740.7619

**E:** [lgbtqplus@usc.edu](mailto:lgbtqplus@usc.edu)

**IG:** @usclgbtqplus

**QuASA:** <https://lgbtqplus.usc.edu/quasa/>

QuASA or the Queer and Ally Student Assembly is one of the Cultural Assemblies within Program Board. As a Cultural Assembly, QuASA serves as the umbrella organization for Queer student groups.

**E:** [quasa@usc.edu](mailto:quasa@usc.edu)

**IG:** @uscquasa

### Lambda LGBT Alumni Association

<https://alumni.usc.edu/lambda/>

The mission of the Lambda LGBT Alumni Association is to award scholarships to current students of any gender or sexual orientation who support LGBT issues; keep members connected to the university and each other via events, activities, professional networking and forums; and create an enriching and supportive community that promotes education, networking and increased visibility for LGBT students and alumni.

Epstein Family Alumni Center

3607 Trousdale Parkway, TCC 305

Los Angeles, CA 90089-3106

**T:** (213) 740-0845

**E:** [lambda@alumnicenter.usc.edu](mailto:lambda@alumnicenter.usc.edu)

### ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC

**Libraries:** <https://one.usc.edu/>

ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries is the largest repository of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) materials in the world.

**USC Student Health - Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention & Services:** <https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/rsvpclientservices/home>

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services provide immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking) and prevention education services for the USC community. The office is located in USC Student Health's Engemann Student Health Center Suite 356, and all client-faced services (clinicians and advocates) are confidential.

1031 W. 34th St, Engemann Student Health Center  
Los Angeles, CA 90089

**T:** (213) 740-WELL (9355)

**E:** [eshcrsvp@usc.edu](mailto:eshcrsvp@usc.edu)

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## USC Student Health - Counseling & Mental Health

- Counseling Services:  
<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/>
- LGBTQ+ & BIPOC Mental Health:  
<https://sites.google.com/usc.edu/bipocmentalhealth>

Counseling and Mental Health programs include individual therapy, group therapy, culturally specific support, crisis support, and psychiatric services and specialties.

1031 W. 34th St, Engemann Student Health Center  
Los Angeles, CA 90089

**T:** (213) 740-WELL (9355)

**E:** [studenthealth@usc.edu](mailto:studenthealth@usc.edu)

## USC Student Health - Gender Affirming

**Care:** <https://studenthealth.usc.edu/transgender-care/>

USC Student Health is committed to providing comprehensive, integrated care for transgender students at USC. *To inquire about medical or healthcare services & coverage, contact Debbie Hansen:*

**T:** (213) 740-2180

## Options for Reporting Bias

**The Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX):** <https://eeotix.usc.edu/>

EEO-TIX manages the University's response to reports of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving community members at all of its locations, including Keck Medicine of USC departments, institutes, and satellite operations. The University encourages the prompt reporting of concerns about discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics—including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking—involving students, staff, and faculty, and related retaliation.

EEO-TIX also supports and centralizes ongoing prevention, education, and training efforts to promote and protect the civil rights of community members across the University.

King Hall

1025 W. 34th Street, 1st Floor

Los Angeles, CA 90089

**T:** (213) 740-5086

**E:** [eeotix@usc.edu](mailto:eeotix@usc.edu)

## USC Office of Professionalism and Ethics:

<https://report.usc.edu>

The Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE) serves as a centralized clearinghouse for complaints and the subsequent tracking of those complaints at USC for both campuses and all university programs and affiliates. The office also provides oversight of investigations.

**T:** (213) 740-5755

**E:** [ope@usc.edu](mailto:ope@usc.edu)

## External Resources

**LA LGBT Center:** <https://lalgbtcenter.org/>

**Campus Pride:** <https://www.campuspride.org/>

**Trans Lifeline:** <https://translifeline.org/>

**The Trevor Project:** <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

**National Institutes of Health Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** <https://www.edi.nih.gov/>

**National Queer & Trans Therapists of Color Network:** <https://www.nqttcn.com/>

**LGBTQ Student Scholarship Database:**  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/scholarships>

**LA County District Attorney's Bureau of Victim Services:** <https://da.lacounty.gov/victims>

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## D. LEARN MORE

### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Studies have reported 56-89% of college students have had at least one adverse childhood experience (ACEs) which can be referred to as traumatic events, including the more severe ACEs (childhood abuse) and 22% reported symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Doughty, 2018). Another study by Duncan (2000) looked at the drop-out rate of college freshmen who had experienced ACEs compared to those who did not. There were significant enrollment differences in the second semester of the freshmen year. Only 82% for ACE-impacted students enroll in the second semester vs. 92% for non-ACE impacted students, the drop-out rate was even higher if the ACE was sexual abuse (Duncan, 2000). Studies show that many college students experience even more trauma during their academic careers. According to the 2019 AAU survey, USC undergraduate women report a rate of 32% for sexual assault or non-consensual sex (see AAU). For college students who identify as LGBTQ+, the rates of sexual and relationship violence experiences are higher than other student cohorts (see AAU). The importance of college faculty and staff recognizing and responding appropriately using a trauma-informed approach to their students is paramount to reduce the incidents of retraumatization.

[Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/ncjrs/ncj258081.htm)

### American Association of University Women (AAUW)

#### Sexual Orientation Toolkit:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-diversity/sexual-orientation/>

#### Gender & Gender Identity Toolkit:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/dimensions-of-diversity/gender-identity/>

#### Key Terms in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/key-terms-concepts/>

### Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU)

#### Applying the Seven Learning Principles to Creating LGBT-Inclusive Classrooms:

<https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/applying-seven-learning-principles-creating-lgbt-inclusive>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

LGBT youth experiences with violence and effects on education and mental health

<https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>

### Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals

- Recommendations for supporting trans and queer students of color (2016)
- Tips for supervisors of LGBT2 student volunteers/workers (2016)
- Best practices for supporting trans students (2014)

<https://www.lgbtcampus.org/policy-practice-recommendations>

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## **Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)**

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) promotes intra-campus collaboration and reflects good practices agreed upon by the profession-at-large through the CAS Standards

<https://www.cas.edu/standard>

## **National Association of Colleges and Employers**

Career Considerations of LGBTQ+ Students:  
Information about how LGBTQ+ students are underrepresented and overrepresented in some fields and how college career centers can offer support

<https://www.nacweb.org/career-development/special-populations/career-considerations-of-LGBTQ-students/>

## **Trauma-Informed Pedagogy for Colleges and Universities**

The Center for Teaching, Research & Learning (CTRL) promotes excellence in teaching and scholarship at American University. CTRL serves as the nexus for faculty development as scholar-teachers who are committed to using evidence-based and data-driven approaches in their pursuits.

[CTRL Faculty Resources \(american.edu\)](https://ctrl.facultyresources.american.edu)



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