



I PROVIDE
SAFETY
SUPPORT
AND RESPECT.



I DESERVE
RESPECT
SUPPORT
AND SAFETY.

“All young people, regardless of what they look like, which religion they follow, who they love, or the gender they identify with, deserve the chance to dream and grow in a loving, permanent home.”

(President Obama, National Foster Care Month 2015 Presidential Proclamation)

The zine you’re reading now is inspired both by current issues facing LGBTQ youth in shelters and group homes and by the quickly approaching future. In our society, attitudes toward sexuality and gender identities are often in flux. Being gay or transgender was once a closely held secret, especially by young people, for fear of an emotionally or physically damaging reaction, from those in authority. Today we recognize that these aspects of a person are important, ingrained, and to be respected.

Those who care for these young people know there are a million different things that can cause problems in a home situation. Race, personality, age, temperament — any of these can spark trouble. But like race or age, a young person’s LGBTQ identity is simply part of who they are. It’s not something they are doing to you. It’s not something they are doing for attention. It’s not a puzzle for you to solve.

That being said, because of how people interact, it can bring with it problems to be addressed. Where does staff put a newly out trans girl to sleep where she will not be in danger of violence from young men, where her identity will be respected, and where everyone involved can get the privacy they need? Can two out lesbian teens share a room? Will a gay boy raised in a strictly religious household fear abuse and prejudice from a staff member wearing Christian jewelry?

Queer kids want what all kids need: Safety. Support. Respect. You are in a position to offer those things. This zine is set up for both you and them, the two halves of this puzzle. Read both sides, take a look at the bigger picture. Use it as a way to break the ice and spawn discussion. Print more and leave them where they’ll be seen. That’s what a zine is for, after all. It’s a tool. Please use it.



“All young people, regardless of what they look like, which religion they follow, who they love, or the gender they identify with, deserve the chance to dream and grow in a loving, permanent

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Hi. You might be gay or lesbian. You might be bisexual or pansexual. You might be transgender or genderqueer or something else entirely. You might be completely secure in your identity or you might not even be sure what’s going on yet. Figuring out who you are and how you fit into the world is something you’ll be doing for the rest of your life.

The thing is, almost no one gets to do this figuring out in a calm, quiet bubble. There are always other people to interact with, and how you identify will affect those interactions. The zine you’re reading was built to help bridge the gap between LGBTQ kids and the people taking care of you.

They probably have their own opinions and thoughts about LGBTQ issues. They might be completely supportive. They might consider themselves allies. They might be trying to balance acceptance with what they were taught. They might be influenced by religion or tradition or personal morals. They might even also be queer.

The one thing they all have in common is that they want to keep you safe. They recognize that you need to be supported and have your identity respected, although they may not be sure yet how to cover all those bases at once. They’ll probably make mistakes from time to time. Please forgive them, as long as they keep trying. Work with them to make the path smoother both for you and the people they care for after you.

This zine is set up for both you and them, two people on a journey together. Read both sides, take a look at the bigger picture. Someone cared enough to offer this zine to you — allow it to help you both to see through the other’s eyes. It’ll be worth it.



But what does it all mean?

RESPECT DOESN'T MEAN YOU ALWAYS GET IT RIGHT,
BUT IT DOES MEAN YOU ALWAYS TRY

These definitions may not be true for everyone. If someone tells you they use a label or term differently, listen — they know how they identify best.

Sex: The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy.

Gender Identity: A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman. For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. Someone's gender identity isn't up for debate.

Gender Expression: External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth, although individuals express gender in many different ways.

Sexual Orientation: A person's physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or not yet completely apparent even to that person.

It can be scary to tell people that you are gay. Or lesbian. Or trans. Or simply queer.

Especially people in power. There are so many ways knowing that about you can be used to make your life difficult. Odds are good you know that from experience.

Sometimes, being safe means hiding part of who you are. It can feel like you live two lives, or three, or dozens. Friends may know you are attracted to other boys or girls while teachers or classmates may have no idea. Sometimes people around you guess. Sometimes they guess wrong, and you get bullied for being gay when you're actually a trans woman.

But sometimes, you need to take that step and tell someone. If the staff don't know, they can't take steps to keep you safe and they can't respect your identity. They can keep the secret from your peers if you want. They can call you by the right name and pronouns if you want, and that can feel like a whole new world opening up. You can ask each other questions that will not just help you but can also help the next queer kids coming along behind you.

The decision is yours. You can come out in small ways, telling one or two people. Or you can come out in a big, fabulous, glittery way, announcing yourself to the world. You can do both in time, if those are the choices you make. If you do come out and feel like safety, support, and respect are not being given, you have people ready to help make that happen.

You do not have to be alone.
The choices are yours.

Transgender or Trans: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms. Use the descriptive term preferred by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

TRANSGENDER IS AN ADJECTIVE! NO ONE IS "A TRANSGENDER," THEY ARE A TRANSGENDER PERSON.

Cisgender: A term used to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," and is therefore an antonym of "trans-."

Gender Non-Conforming: A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming. Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional — that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. This is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming.

Non-binary and/or genderqueer: Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. This is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

This home has a nondiscrimination policy that explicitly includes sexual orientation and gender identity. Anti-LGBT harassment and discrimination is unacceptable behavior that will not be tolerated. Make sure they give you a copy.

BULLYING, VIOLENCE, AND TARGETED DISRESPECT FROM STAFF OR OTHER RESIDENTS HAS NO PLACE HERE.

This policy prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination, including jokes, slurs, and name calling. It applies to everyone: agency personnel, providers, and all direct care staff, including foster parents, relative caregivers, and facility staff. It protects you and the people caring for you. And it includes a formal grievance procedure that allows for confidential complaints and neutral third-party investigations.

Just knowing they have the right to make their issues heard if they are not being respected and protected at the immediate level can give queer youth the security to open up about their identities.

Staff members may have their own beliefs regarding LGBT+ issues, but they are not allowed to impose those upon you. They've been asked to respect your name and pronouns, as well as protecting you from violence and bullying. If you do not feel safe or respected, use these resources to make your voice heard.

YOU ARE ALLOWED TO REQUEST A PHONE TO CALL THE FL DCF ABUSE HOTLINE.

1-800-96-ABUSE or 1-800-962-2873

Grievance forms are also available in all shelters and can be filled out and dropped into a locked box to be collected. These resources are there for you. Use them.

THE WORLD CHANGES QUICKLY.

It seems like it only takes a few months for common knowledge to turn into outdated info. This can be especially true when it comes to queer youth and how they identify, both for individuals and across the board. That being said, there still need to be written policies in place that can be understood by both staff and residents. The trick is in adopting policies that are strong enough to supply safety and loose enough to stay respectful and supportive as things change.

Adopting a nondiscrimination policy that explicitly includes sexual orientation and gender identity makes clear that anti-LGBT harassment and discrimination is unacceptable behavior that will not be tolerated. The existence of such a policy also gives staff members the support they need to respond appropriately to anti-LGBT harassment. Providers and staff members are not asked to give up their beliefs about LGBT+ issues, but being respectful means not judging others by or holding others to those beliefs. For example, you can think that gender is inborn and immutable, but you are still asked to use the requested name and pronouns for those under your care. Even if an individual sometimes changes those requests. This isn't about you, it's about those are you protecting and housing.

A GOOD POLICY WILL

- prohibit all forms of harassment and discrimination, including jokes, slurs, and name calling;
- apply to all agency personnel from managers to caseworkers, providers who contract to serve youth in the agency's custody, and all direct care staff, including foster parents, relative caregivers, and facility staff — if it doesn't apply to everyone, it doesn't work;
- protect agency personnel and contractors, as well as youth and families served by the agency; and
- include a formal grievance procedure that allows for confidential complaints and neutral third-party investigations. Just knowing they have the right to make their issues heard if they are not being respected and protected at the immediate level can give queer youth the security to open up about their identities.

IF THERE IS NO POLICY IN PLACE WHERE YOU ARE, YOU ARE STILL PROTECTED.

The program provides an environment in which youth, staff, and others feel safe, secure, and not threatened by any form of abuse or harassment.

1. Program staff adheres to a code of conduct that prohibits the use of physical abuse, profanity, threats, or intimidation. Youth are not deprived of basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and security.
3. The program must have an accessible and responsive grievance process for youth to provide feedback and address complaints. The process should allow youth to grieve actions of staff and conditions or circumstances related to the violation or denial of basic rights. Direct care workers shall not handle the complaint/grievance document unless assistance requested by youth.
4. Management takes immediate action to address incidents of physical and/or psychological abuse, verbal intimidation, use of profanity, and/or excessive use of force.

[Florida Network Policy: Quality Improvement Standards: Indicator 1.02]

- § 115.342 Placement of residents in housing, bed, program, education, and work assignments
- (c) Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex residents shall not be placed in particular housing, bed, or other assignments solely on the basis of such identification or status, nor shall agencies consider lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex identification or status as an indicator of likelihood of being sexually abusive.
- (d) In deciding whether to assign a transgender or intersex resident to a facility for male or female residents, and in making other housing and programming assignments, the agency shall consider on a case-by-case basis whether a placement would ensure the resident's health and safety, and whether the placement would present management or security problems.
- (e) Placement and programming assignments for each transgender or intersex resident shall be reassessed at least twice each year to review any threats to safety experienced by the resident.
- (f) A transgender or intersex resident's own views with respect to his or her own safety shall be given serious consideration.
- (g) Transgender and intersex residents shall be given the opportunity to shower separately from other residents.

[US Department Of Justice National Prea Standards]

Agencies should ensure that all youth, families, providers, staff, and caregivers are aware of the agency's nondiscrimination policy by:

- including a copy of the policy in the staff training or orientation for every new employee, contractor, and caregiver;
- discussing application of the policy to help employees and caregivers understand what it means to provide nondiscriminatory treatment and services;
- including the policy in any written handbook or orientation materials provided to youth entering the system;
- discussing the policy with every child who is capable of understanding it;
- posting the policy in agency offices, group care facilities, courtrooms, and other strategic locations; and
- including the policy in culturally and developmentally appropriate written materials designed for youth and their families.

Effective implementation of a nondiscrimination policy requires a written procedure for filing and resolving complaints of discrimination or harassment. To evaluate implementation and performance of nondiscrimination policies, agencies should keep records of each complaint and its resolution. It is also helpful to appoint an oversight body or individual to review the grievance records regularly to identify potential problems, patterns, or need for additional training.

work when your ID doesn't match your current gender presentation because you can't afford to pay for a name change because you can't get work. And all of this is even harder for youth just starting out and lacking experience.

They know you struggle, but do they know 40% OF LGBTQ PEOPLE ATTEMPT SUICIDE? Not because you are mentally ill or clinically depressed, but because of the stresses and abuse that come with being transgender or gender variant in our society. Many people believe that you deserve it for how you express your gender. They're wrong. Even the cisgender people who care for you don't always see the strength and intelligence necessary for survival as yourselves. They don't always see what it takes for you to rise up, step over the stumbling blocks, and knock down the walls built to pen you in.

Many times, trans people have to walk that hard path alone. You may be here because you refused to lie and hide yourself or refused to be brutalized because of it. But if you are reading this zine, someone here cares about LGBTQ people. The staff are actively trying.

IF YOU ARE AFRAID OR BULLIED, SPEAK TO SOMEONE. AFTER ALL, THE PERSON YOU TELL MAY HAVE THEIR OWN GENDER EXPERIENCE YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT. LET THEM HELP.

In many ways, the system is still trying to figure out how best to balance safety with respect and support for LGBTQ youth. Care givers can work to solve the problems that they know about and try to prevent them from happening ahead of time, but they're not you. They may not see a problem or a roadblock that makes life even harder for queer youth.

They may know that 8% OF TRANSGENDER YOUTH ARE KICKED OUT OF THEIR HOMES when their parents or guardians find out, but they may not know all the little ways a family can make life miserable until 10% OF TRANS OR GENDER VARIANT KIDS RUN AWAY FROM HOME.

This can take many forms, including forced adherence to gender stereotypes opposed to a trans person's identity or lack of support against bullies in the school or community. They know it can include physical abuse, especially against young trans women, but they may not realize how much it hurts when a parent insists on using the wrong name because they picked it out and "have the right" to keep using it.

They may know that 29% OF TRANS PEOPLE SPEND TIME LIVING IN POVERTY, compared to 12% in the U.S. population, but they may not know how hard it is to get a job that will work with someone who is gender variant. They may not realize what a vicious cycle it is trying to get

THE NUMBERS:

- 54% of people who were out as or seen as being transgender while in school (K-12) were verbally harassed. 24% suffered physically assault specifically because they were transgender. It's so bad that 17% left school as a result.

- One in ten trans people who were out to their immediate family reported that a family member was violent towards them because of their gender. 8% were kicked out of the house, and 10% ran away from home. For transgender and gender variant people, home can feel less safe than the streets.

- Only 11% of respondents reported that all of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred, while 68% had no correct ID. Name changes can cost hundreds of dollars, and that money can be hard to come by. This can become a huge problem — 32% of trans people who have shown an ID with a name or gender that did not match their gender presentation were verbally harassed, denied benefits or service, asked to leave, or assaulted. This can't happen. No matter what our individual beliefs, we all want to keep kids safe.

- The violence, harassment, and barriers to getting support or employment resulted in 39% of trans people experienced serious psychological distress in the month before completing the survey, compared with only 5% of the U.S. population. This leads directly to 40% of trans people attempting suicide in their lifetime, nearly nine times the rate in the U.S. population.

- 30% of this population have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. In the past year, one in eight experienced homelessness because of being transgender. 26% avoided staying in a shelter because they feared being mistreated as a transgender person. This fear is not unfounded: 70% reported some form of mistreatment, including being harassed, sexually or physically assaulted, or kicked out because of being transgender. This is not their fault, the blame lies with the system that allows this to continue. Be part of the needed support.

- Trans people held in jail, prison, or juvenile detention faced high rates of physical and sexual assault by facility staff and other inmates. 23% physically assaulted by staff or other inmates, and one in five (were sexually assaulted. Respondents were over five times more likely to be sexually assaulted by facility staff than the U.S. population in jails and prisons, and over nine times more likely to be sexually assaulted by other inmates. Watch out for this behavior and protect the kids in your care from those who prey upon them. You may not believe transgender and gender-variant people about their identities. You may have your own ideas that clash with them. But you want to keep them safe, so respect what they tell you. Have their backs.

6B

STONEWALL: OUR HISTORY

A few decades ago, to be gay was to be illegal. Get found out? Lose your job, lose your family, lose your home. There were laws against wearing the clothes of the opposite sex. Being attracted to those of your gender was a mental disorder. Get busted in one of the regular police raids on gay bars, the only meeting place open to LGBTQ people? Lose your freedom. Lose your human dignity. Lose any right to life and love.

On June 28, 1969, in the wee hours of the night, the NYC police department went to raid a mafia-owned bar called the Stonewall Inn. It catered to the least respected people, even in the gay world—the stone butches, the drag queens, the homeless queer kids that lived in a nearby park. Folks who drank and danced there (it was the only gay bar in NYC that allowed dancing, by the way) came from all ethnic backgrounds.

50 years ago, 7 officers stepped up to the front of the Stonewall Inn, which didn't even have a back door or fire exits. As they did more than monthly, they announced, "Police! We're taking the place!" One of the officers called for the vans and backup, and they began to force the 200 patrons into lines. They ordered everyone to present ID, and those suspected of being in drag were told to follow a policewoman into the bathroom for a gender check.

50 years ago - not that long at all - those queers started to say NO. They refused to let the cops in their pants and under their skirts. They refused to show ID. The police van was slow in coming that night, and people were already angry. Revolution - on so many levels - was in the air in those years, and the "sexual deviants" had been through enough. The Civil Rights era was in full swing, and gay and trans people wanted their turn.

About a third of the bar patrons were cut loose, shoved out the door to slink away and count their blessings. But they didn't. They started to taunt the police, gathering a much larger (and mostly gay) crowd. As the wagons finally pulled up and the officers tried to get people into them, someone shouted "Gay Power!" Others began to sing "We Shall Overcome." A cop shoved a drag queen, and she hit him with her purse. Someone yelled back that those inside the bar were being beaten. The crowd reached into their pockets and pulled out the only ammo they had - pennies, bottle caps - and started throwing them at the police. Those were followed by bottles and rocks.

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6A

STORMÉ DELARVERIE

In the 50s she toured as a Drag King. In 1969, she was one of the butch lesbians who first fought back against the police at Stonewall. In the 80s and 90s, she patrolled the streets of NYC, protecting the customers of the gay bars from violence or harassment. Delaverie also organized and performed at benefits for battered women and children. When asked why she did these things, she just said, "Someone has to care." She did her gay rights work locally instead of nationally, but still, she was a hero.

BAYARD RUSTIN

A leading activist in the early Civil Rights era, Rustin helped teach Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr about nonviolence after working with Mahatma Gandhi's movement in India. Rustin was the chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the site of the famous "I Have A Dream Speech." He concentrated on the economic problems of working-class and unemployed African Americans. Rustin was out and gay and called a pervert and worse, but still he fought. He was a hero.

MARSHA P JOHNSON

She would tell you the P stood for "pay it no mind." A self-described drag queen, she would sometimes say the same thing about her gender. Marsha was there that night at Stonewall. She was one of the first to fight back, and she fought for queer rights for the rest of her life. Marsha helped set up the first shelter for gay and trans teens, way back in 1972. She'd been one of them and knew the struggle. Marsha was an artist and a singer. She was unashamed in a time when being gay or trans was criminal or worse. She was a hero.

OUR HISTORY, continued

A butch lesbian was dragged out of the club in handcuffs. She fought back, unwilling to be shoved into the van, bleeding from where she'd been struck in the head with a billy club. Finally, she turned to the crowd and asked, "Why don't you guys do something?" and the place erupted. They battled back and forth, the crowd throwing bricks and garbage cans, turning over the paddy wagon, slashing the tires on the cop cars. For the first time, the police were forced to retreat in the face of the queers they'd set out to brutalize and dehumanize.

All night, fighting raged. The queens set up kick lines, taunting the police with songs and insulting rhymes, fading back when the officers attacked them with clubs and firehoses, only to start up again when they moved down the street. The police chased a handful of young gay men around a corner, only to find themselves in full flight when they suddenly faced a wall of angry people shouting, "Catch them!" The next night was the same. Many people who were there say that they remember, as much as the riot itself, that suddenly people were kissing in the streets. Gays and lesbians were openly being physically affectionate to one another, not hiding in bars where you had to give your name at the peephole to get in. People felt free to wear the clothing they wanted instead of what was considered "appropriate" for their perceived gender.

50 years ago, the entire gay rights movement burst into life. Oh, there were inklings and struggling starts before, of course, and brave men and women who fought hard for change. But it was that night, when the queers fought back, that pushed it out in the open and started the boom. In their fight for the right to marry and the right to join the army, the mainstream gay movement would be wise to remember that it was people like Martha P. Johnson, that it was working class and homeless queers, that led the charge.

So here's to those who fought back that night, the ones we know and the ones we don't, some nameless but none of them hopeless. Here's to kicklines in the face of police brutality, and swinging purses, and standing proud when others would shame you, all to be able to love and live freely. 50 years. Truly amazing.