

NATIONAL POSITION STATEMENT ON GENDER IDENTITY

NOVEMBER 2023

**girls
inc.**

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold

GENDER IDENTITY POSITION STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

The mission of Girls Inc. is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. We recognize that girls still face significant challenges in our society, and we meet these challenges by helping girls explore and celebrate their strengths, their voices, who they are today, and who they will become. Girls Inc. equips girls to navigate gender, economic, and social barriers and grow up healthy, educated, and independent. Girls build confidence and embrace positive decision-making to take charge of their health and well-being and achieve their academic, personal, and career goals.

Girls Inc. is proud to provide girls across the U.S. and Canada with a welcoming, inclusive environment where they can feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves freely. In 2017, members of the original Girls Inc. Gender Identity Committee¹ researched policies and related materials to provide guidance to our affiliates regarding the enrollment and participation of transgender, gender nonconforming, and gender expansive individuals in Girls Inc. programming. This includes both individuals newly applying to participate in Girls Inc. programming and existing enrolled individuals whose gender identity might shift over the course of their enrollment.

Since 2017, awareness, understanding, and terminology related to gender expansiveness have rapidly evolved. We are grateful to the many Affiliates and individuals in the Network who have worked tirelessly to create welcoming and inclusive environments for all girls, including cisgender girls, and young people who are non-binary, questioning, or transgender. Following in-depth discussions with Affiliate and National Office leaders over the past year about the intersection of gender identity, inclusion, and the Girls Inc. organizational identity, it was clear that this was a topic that required greater input from the entire Network. In November 2022, the *Survey on Serving Gender Expansive Youth at Girls Inc.* was launched directly to a Network-wide distribution list. The survey asked respondents to share when, where, and how the issues of gender identity and inclusion shows up in their work, along with their perspectives on terminology and requests for training and support. The survey received responses from 610 individuals representing 70 affiliates and the National office across all roles within the network. This strong response affirmed the importance we place on valuing our different identities. An external data strategist conducted the analysis of the responses resulting in a series of Next Steps. The revision of our National Position Statement on Gender Identity is the first step.

In 2023, a new task force² was formed to revise the Girls Inc. National Position Statement on Gender Identity to reflect changes in evolving language and understanding of LGBTQ2IA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, and other marginalized identities) individuals and to

¹ The members of the Gender Identity Committee included (1) from the Girls Inc. National Staff: Pat Driscoll, Chief Operating Officer; Lara Kaufmann, Director of Public Policy; Sandi Skwor-Gatlin, Assistant Director of Learning Central; and Damary Bonilla-Rodriguez, Latina Initiative Project Manager; and (2) from Girls Inc. Affiliates: Deb Ansourlian, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of Lynn; Kim Brown, President & CEO of Girls Inc. of Santa Fe; Wendy Calimag, Senior Director of Community Programs for Girls Inc. of Alameda County; and Sonya Ulibarri, President & CEO of Girls Inc. of Metro Denver.

² The members of the Gender Expansive Task Force included (1) from the Girls Inc. National Staff: Niki Kelly, VP, Affiliate Services; Veronica Vela, VP, Marketing and Communication; Katie Astrich, Director, Public Policy; Sandi Skwor-Gatlin, Director, Program Services; Keesha Hughes, Director, DEI and Talent Management; Sarah Diaz, Senior Learning Manager; and (2) from Girls Inc. Affiliates: Abigail Allard, Development and Communications Manager at Girls Inc. of the Berkshires; Cyreena Ashby Boston, CEO of Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest; Bridget Brown, Supervisor of Teen Pregnancy Prevention at Girls Inc. of Boston and Lynn; Kim Brown, President & CEO of Girls Inc. of Santa Fe; Erin Chupka, VP of Programs at Girls Inc. of Metropolitan Dallas; Amanda Daniels, Executive Director of Girls Inc. of Fort Smith; Mel Dase, Executive Assistant, Girls Inc. of Santa Barbara; and Maggie Fiel, Program Manager at Girls Inc. of Santa Fe

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reaffirm Girls Inc.'s commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, welcoming environment for gender expansive young people who feel the Girls Inc. pro-girl environment is the best fit for them.

II. BACKGROUND

There is a strong foundation for inclusiveness in the history and stated values of Girls Inc.

Notably, the Girls Inc. "Girls' Bill of Rights" states:

"Girls have the right to be themselves and to resist gender stereotypes"

and

"Girls have the right to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm."

The Organizational Values of Girls Inc. have been defined as follows:

- Respect the dignity of each human being;
- Recognize and support the strength in every girl;
- Appreciate, embrace, and advance diversity;
- Drive for results anchored in accountability; and
- Operate collaboratively.

Additionally, the Girls Inc. Advocacy Statements, which were adopted by a vote of the whole organization and are available in their entirety on the National Girls Inc. website, also support a strong position of inclusion.

First, the "Gender Equity" section of the Advocacy Statements says:

Today, gender equity is still not a reality; and Girls Inc. responds through both programs and advocacy for girls of every background and description. We affirm our support for equal rights and commit our resources to the active promotion of gender equity . . . It is our conviction that gender equity will only be achieved when both girls and boys have the opportunity, the resources, and the freedom to become the people they want to be. In the pursuit of this goal, it is incumbent on us as a society to create a spirit of inclusive empowerment. . . . Girls Inc. is committed to building a culture of unity and hope, one in which each child is recognized and valued.

The section on "Diversity and Inclusion" further states:

Girls Inc. is committed to diversity in principle and practice. We work to make our organization welcoming and accessible to all girls. Our commitment is founded in our communal sense of justice and our belief that the world and our organization are enriched by the diversity of our cultures and experiences. We strive toward a world of understanding and mutual support.

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Working with girls and young women, we also endeavor to eliminate sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination. We celebrate the similarities and differences among girls and embrace girls of every background and ability. . . . We are committed to building an organization and a society that recognizes diversity and celebrates all girls.

And finally, the section on “Sexuality” states:

Girls have a right to positive, supportive environments and linkages to community resources for dealing with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

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Girls Inc. is committed to providing the comprehensive Girls Inc. Experience to those who identify as girls and those gender expansive young people who feel our pro-girl environment is the best fit for them.

It is the national position of Girls Inc. that our member organizations should not discriminate or exclude girls from our programming based on their gender identity.

This position maintains our commitment to gender equality and justice and responds to modern and continuing advances in our understanding of gender identity and expression by welcoming those who experience gender-based oppression.

Scope: This position applies to new Girls Inc. enrollees as well as participants already enrolled in our programs. Girls Inc. affiliates should handle this on a case-by-case basis when a young person is questioning their identity or deciding to transition, keeping the above values and principles in mind. These individuals will be supported/welcomed for as long as they feel that the Girls Inc. pro-girl environment is the best fit for them.

Language: Girls Inc. staff should respect a young person’s wishes to be called by a certain name and/or gender pronoun. For any questions about language, please see the definitions section below.

Young people who identify as LGBTQ2IA+ or who are exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity need to know that Girls Inc. is a safe space where they belong and can be themselves and express themselves freely without fear of discrimination or mistreatment from others.

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At Girls Inc., we know that language matters. Girls who identify as LGBTQ2IA+ or who are exploring their sexual orientation and/or gender identity need to know that Girls Inc. is a safe space where they can be fully themselves, free from worry about experiencing harmful treatment from others. Using respectful language facilitates participants coming forward with questions or concerns. This includes referring to a girl using the name or gender pronoun with which they are most comfortable.

This glossary was created to help ensure that we are consistent across the Girls Inc. network with regard to the language we use, and that we all refer to gender and sexuality in a respectful manner. It is important to note that language regarding LGBTQ2IA+ identities is evolving and dynamic in nature. Like most forms of language focused on justice and inclusion, this language evolves along with the lived experiences of the population represented. While this list of terms is not exhaustive and the definitions may not be perfect, we believe they are a starting point. By choosing respectful language, we can make conversations about gender and sexuality easier and more comfortable for everyone, and avoid alienating those we aim to serve.

Ally

A term generally relating to individuals who support marginalized groups. In the LGBTQ2IA+ community, this term is used to describe an individual who is supportive of LGBTQ2IA+ individuals and the community, either personally or as an advocate. Allies include both heterosexual and cisgender people who advocate for equality in partnership with LGBTQ2IA+ people, as well as people within the LGBTQ2IA+ community who advocate for others in the community. "Ally" is not an identity, and allyship is an ongoing process of learning that includes action.

Asexual

Asexual orientation is generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partners sexually. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity regardless of sexual desire or attraction. Some asexual people do engage in sexual activity. There are many diverse ways of being asexual. Asexual people are included under the LGBTQ2IA+ inclusive 'umbrella', and asexual youth can face many forms of oppression due to their identity.

Cisgender

A term used to describe a person whose gender identity corresponds with the identified sex assigned at birth.

Diversity

Diversity is the differences among people based on race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic status, or other visible or invisible characteristics.

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Gender Expansive

One of many umbrella terms used to describe someone whose gender identity and/or gender expression expands beyond, actively resists, and/or does not conform to the current cultural or social expectations of gender, particularly in relation to male or female.

Gender Expectations/Roles or Gender Normative

Socially constructed characteristics that denote how certain genders are expected to act, speak, appear, and conduct themselves – such as the norms, roles, and relationships that exist between them. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.

Gender Expression

Refers to the ways in which people present gender to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. Alternatively, people may assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms, and other characteristics. Sometimes, transgender people seek to match their physical expression with their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex. Gender expression should not be viewed as an indication of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Gender Identity

One's innermost concept of self as male, female, or a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. For some, their gender identity is different from their assigned sex.

Gender Nonconforming

A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender assigned at birth, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

Girl

A girl is a young person who identifies as a girl regardless of her assigned sex at birth, or who identifies as a girl while exploring gender identity or expression.

Inclusion

Inclusion means that everyone is visible, heard, and considered. Practices and/or policies provide equal access to opportunities and resources for all. The uniqueness of individual and group talents, beliefs, backgrounds, experiences, capabilities, and ways of living are acknowledged as beneficial in each common endeavor.

Intersex

A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a biological makeup, or reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. Intersex is a socially constructed category that reflects real biological variations.

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“In Transition” or “Gender Transition”

The process by which people strive to align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns, and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person, and some transgender people may make no outward changes at all. Terms like "sex change" have become offensive and outdated, implying that one's sex must match their identity.

LGBTQ2IA+

Girls Inc. preferred acronym for inclusivity, for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, intersex and asexual, aromantic, or agender (sometimes ally). The "+" at the end is an acknowledgment of those individuals who do not fall under these categories.

Microaggressions

Verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative thoughts, biases, and insults about another person's marginalized identity/identities.

Misgendering

The act of referring to someone outwardly in a way that does not correctly reflect their asserted gender (e.g., using incorrect name or pronouns). This may be subconscious and unintentional or can be a maliciously employed expression of anti-transgender bias. Regardless of intent, misgendering has a harmful impact and can result in hostile and unsupportive environments for gender expansive students.

Nonbinary

An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Nonbinary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories.

Pansexual

Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction is to people inclusive of all genders. People who are pansexual need not have had any sexual experience: It is the attraction and self-identification that determine the orientation.

Personal/Gender Pronouns

In addition to the traditional pronouns (he/him, she/her, they), some people prefer to use gender-neutral pronouns, such as ne, ve, ze/zie, and xe. If you don't know an individual's personal pronoun, it's always best to ask. [Increasingly, young people are requesting that "they" be used as their personal, singular gender-neutral pronoun.]

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Queer

(1) An umbrella term sometimes used by LGBTQ2IA+ people to refer to the entire LGBTQ2IA+ community; and (2) An alternative that some people use to "queer" the idea of the labels and categories such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, etc. Similar to the concept of "genderqueer." Note: Previously used as a slur, and still considered by some to be offensive language, it has been reclaimed by many in the community who consider the term to be central to their identity and the history of their civil rights struggles. This is also the accepted academic term, e.g. 'Queer Studies'.

Questioning

The process of exploring one's own gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation.

Sex Assigned at Birth

Determination made of an infant's sex at the time of birth, usually made by a doctor or other medical professional upon examination of the infant's external genitalia. Transgender people have a gender identity that differs from their assigned sex.

Sexual Orientation

Describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The term "sexual identity" is also gaining common usage in place of the term "sexual orientation." The term "sexual preference" has previously been used interchangeably with "sexual orientation" but has been replaced as the scientific community has proven that sexual attraction is not a choice or a preference but an immutable trait.

Transgender

A term for people whose gender identity is different from cultural expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

Two-Spirit/ed

A term found in Indigenous and Native American cultures, often involving birth-assigned men or women taking on the identities and roles of the opposite sex. A sacred and historical identity, *two-spirit* can include but is by no means limited to LGBTQ+ identities and is not synonymous with LGBTQ+.

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V. QUESTIONS THAT HAVE ARISEN OR MAY ARISE

As noted above, awareness, understanding, and terminology related to gender expansiveness have rapidly evolved over the past few years. As a result, many people are in very different places in the evolution of their own understanding and feelings related to gender identity, gender expansiveness, and what it all means. Therefore it is to be expected that there could be many different questions that people have. Though this list is not exhaustive, we have done our best to thoughtfully address each of the questions raised with the hopes of bringing greater clarity and understanding to all.

Who is a girl?

A girl is a young person who identifies as a girl regardless of her assigned sex at birth, or who identifies as a girl while exploring gender identity or expression.

When should I use girls, youth, participants, or girls+ when talking about who Girls Inc. serves?

Given that Girls Inc. is the longest-running girls leadership program and that we are the leading experts on girls, we should start with “girls” when writing or speaking about our work. It is also acceptable thereafter to alternate between “girls,” “participants,” and “young people” to be inclusive. Please also note that “young people” is considered more positive and affirming than “youth” and therefore the recommended option. “Girls+” has not been adopted for use by our organization.

Why do we say “identifies as a girl” instead of just saying “girls”?

The awareness, understanding, and terminology related to gender expansiveness isn’t just rapidly evolving, it is very complex. The task force engaged in very thoughtful dialogue around this issue and sought the opinions of those with lived experiences. It was decided that for now saying those who “identify as girls” feels more inclusive. This too will continue to be reassessed as understanding and terminology continue to evolve.

What is my response if I am questioned about “being Girls Inc.” but also open to non-binary and trans-youth?

Girls Inc. is committed to providing the comprehensive Girls Inc. Experience to those who identify as girls, and those gender expansive young people who feel our pro-girl environment is the best fit for them.

Why does my support of trans youth matter?

According to the 2022 Trevor Project survey on the mental health of LGBTQ2IA+ youth, youth who receive a high level of support from their environments report attempting suicide at less than half the rate of youth who do not have such support. All LGBTQ2IA+ youth face many challenges and barriers to their well-being; the support of an inclusive and welcoming environment at Girls Inc. can make a huge difference in their lives.

What should I do if I mislabel or misgender someone?

Simply correct yourself and move on. Spending too much time on it may make the individual and/or others feel uncomfortable.

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Is it possible for young people to have a clear understanding of their gender identity? Are they mature enough to comprehend and express their gender accurately?

It is common for individuals who identify as gender expansive to have recognized their gender identity from a young age but may not have felt comfortable sharing it with others. Today, with increased awareness and understanding of gender identity, more young people feel empowered to express their identity at a younger age.

What if someone assigned female at birth transitions to a boy while in a Girls Inc. program? Can he still participate in the program?

Each person who is transitioning their gender does so in their own unique way, and their gender identity may fluctuate over time. If a participant confides in you that they are transitioning to a boy, it means that you have provided a high level of safety and support for the young person to share that information. Excluding them from the program while they are not ready to socially transition may exclude them from important resources that support their overall well-being.

What if someone in Girls Inc. starts to identify as a boy and does not want to be in the program anymore, but his parents/caregivers want him to continue?

Some desire immediate social transitioning, which may be far too fast for parents and family members who are still adjusting to their child's reality. For young people in particular under the age of 18, the response from parents and family members is critical. In this case, it might be important that both the young person and family members are given access to resources and support to determine what program would be the best fit for the young person.

What if someone assigned male at birth identifies as a girl but still presents like a "traditional boy"? Should we enroll her in the program?

Remember a young person who is transitioning their gender does so in their own unique way. Someone transitioning to a girl may be ready to make a social transition but not in their outward appearance. We should treat them like any other gender nonconforming young person in the program.

What if a young person identifying as a girl wants to be in Girls Inc. but her parent/caregiver does not accept her gender identity and does not want her to be in the program?

Ultimately, it is up to the parent/caregiver to enroll their child in the program regardless of whether the child is transgender or cisgender. In this case, it might be helpful for the young person and family members to be given access to resources and support.

What if we think a boy is identifying as a girl just to be in the program?

Identifying as transgender brings with it challenges and often discrimination. It is not something people choose to do to participate in programs. Like in many other areas of their life, some young people may be exploring their gender expression and the labels they use to describe themselves. Such exploration is a normal part of adolescent development.

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Will all transgender youth eventually take hormones and have gender affirming surgery?

Some transgender people may seek out gender-affirming healthcare such as hormones or gender-affirming surgery. However, for a number of reasons, many transgender people do not take either of these steps. Some feel comfortable with their bodies the way they are. For others, hormones and surgery are inaccessible because they may be too expensive and/or require parental permission.

Please feel free to submit additional questions to communications@girlsinc.org

VI. PREFERRED LANGUAGE

It is imperative to be sensitive to others and avoid using HARMFUL words. The words we use have an impact on other people and can cause harm. Out of a genuine sense of caring and compassion, and not simply because we want to be "politically correct," we should seek to understand others and communicate with respect.

Being "politically correct" is externally driven, behaving in a way that will gain approval from others. However, being "inclusive" is internally driven, treating the other person with sensitivity and respect. Using inclusive language is a mindset and an attitude that is motivated by a sincere desire to show respect for others. Whereas this is an approach to preventing the use of harmful language, there must always be a commitment to this practice, and even to updating language, definitions, and practices over time.

HARMFUL: "homosexual" (as a n. or adj.)

PREFERRED: "gay" (adj.); "gay man" "lesbian" (n.), "bisexual", "pansexual"

Please use "lesbian" or "gay man" to describe people attracted to members of the same sex. Use the term bisexual to describe individuals who are attracted to individuals of the same or opposite gender. Use pansexual when referring to someone who is attracted to all genders or regardless of their sex or gender identity. Due to the clinical history of the word "homosexual," it has been adopted by anti-gay extremists to suggest that lesbians and gay men are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered-notions discredited by both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using "homosexual" except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using "homosexual" as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word "gay."

HARMFUL: "homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual couple," "homosexual sex," etc.

PREFERRED: "relationship" (or "sexual relationship"), "couple" (or, if necessary, "same-sex couple"), "sex," etc.

Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" is offensive and should be avoided. This is a form of 'othering', which intrinsically treats a marginalized person or group of people as different from something that is seen as a default 'norm'. As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion or relationship "gay" or "lesbian" unless you would call the same activity, emotion or relationship "straight" if engaged in by someone who is straight.

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HARMFUL: "sexual preference"

PREFERRED: "sexual orientation" or "sexual identity"

The phrase "sexual preference" is generally used to suggest that being lesbian or gay is something that needs to be corrected or "cured." The term "sexual orientation" is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of all orientations.

HARMFUL: "gay lifestyle" or "homosexual lifestyle"

PREFERRED: "lesbian" or "gay"

There is no single lesbian or gay lifestyle. Lesbians and gay men are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrase "gay lifestyle" is used to denigrate lesbians and gay men, suggesting that their sexual orientation is something that needs to be corrected or "cured."

HARMFUL: "admitted homosexual" or "avowed homosexual"

PREFERRED: "openly lesbian" or "openly gay" or "openly bisexual"

Dated term used to describe those who are openly lesbian or gay or who have recently come out of the closet. The words "admitted" or "avowed" suggest that being a lesbian or gay man is somehow shameful or inherently secretive. Avoid the use of the word "homosexual" in either case.

HARMFUL: "gay agenda" or "homosexual agenda"

PREFERRED: "lesbian and gay civil rights movement" or "LGBTQ2IA rights" or "queer rights movement"

The LGBTQ2IA+ community is as diverse in political beliefs as other communities. A commitment to equal rights is one LGBTQ2IA+ members share with civil rights advocates who are not necessarily a part of the LGBTQ2IA community. "Lesbian and gay civil rights movement", "LGBTQ2IA+ rights movement", or "queer rights movement" more accurately describes the historical effort to achieve understanding and equal treatment for the LGBTQ2IA+ community. Notions of a "homosexual agenda" are rhetorical inventions to portray as sinister the LGBTQ2IA+ civil rights movement.

HARMFUL: "special rights"

PREFERRED: "equal rights" or "equal protection"

Anti-gay extremists frequently characterize civil rights and equal protection of the law for LGBTQ2IA+ people as "special rights" in an attempt to energize opposition to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws.

HARMFUL: "tranny", "transsexual" or "transgendered"

PREFERRED: "Transgender person," "transgender man," "transgender woman," "trans person," "trans man," "trans woman"

Tranny is used as a dehumanizing slur to describe transgender individuals and is oftentimes the last word someone hears before they are brutally attacked. Similar to the anti-gay F-word, the term "tranny" is commonly used to humiliate and degrade transgender individuals.

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HARMFUL: "Hey Guys/Girls, boys/girls, ladies/gents, you guys or you girls".

PREFERRED: As these terms are gender normative and not inclusive of all identities, especially those marginalized communities, terms like "pals/friends", "Y'all", and "students" are more inclusive of all the participants in a program or classroom.

VII. RESOURCES

Girls Inc. is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and to ensuring that we provide girls with a safe and supportive environment. As with all aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is key that our entire network is educated and equipped with resources to support our young people.

Ongoing Practices for Girls Inc. LGBTQ2IA+ Allies:

- Examine your biases and engage in ongoing self-appraisal.
- Educate yourself on sexual orientation and gender identity and seek out opportunities to learn from those with lived experiences different than your own.
- Listen to youth. Take them seriously.
- When someone tells you their preferred name and/or pronouns, use them. If you don't know someone's pronoun, you can ask them if they would like to share theirs with you and respect their choice to share or decline to share.
- Stand up and defend LGBTQ2IA+ youth if you witness bullying or harassment.
- Use non-assumptive, gender-neutral language when referring to another person whose gender is not known by you.
- Advocate for inclusive and non-discriminatory policies and practices.
- Routinely ensure that materials and resources reflect LGBTQ2IA+ identities.
- Recognize and own your privilege. Being an effective ally involves acknowledging your privilege. Use your privilege for the benefit of others. Understand that privilege means there are certain things you don't have to confront because of an aspect of your identity.
- Remember there are no perfect allies! Recognize that even if you mean well in what you do or say, you may make mistakes. Apologize when mistakes or missteps occur, and commit to learning from the experience.

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ2IA+ INDIVIDUALS

LGBTQ2IA+ individuals face marginalization in some ethnic, racial, and religious communities. At Girls Inc. we have an opportunity to support young people from all backgrounds as they come to understand their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Supporting Latino LGBTQ2IA+ youth:

- Latinx LGBTQ Youth Report (Human Rights Campaign)
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/latinx-lgbtq-youth-report>
- Coming Out: Living Authentically as LGBTQ Latine Americans (Human Rights Campaign)
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/coming-out-living-authentically-as-lgbtq-latinx-americans>

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- Religion and Coming Out Issues for Latinxs
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/religion-and-coming-out-issues-for-latinas-and-latinos>

Supporting Black LGBTQ2IA+ youth:

- Coming Out: Living Authentically as Black LGBTQ People
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/coming-out-living-authentically-as-black-lgbtq-people>
- Supporting Black LGBTQ Youth Mental Health
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/supporting-black-lgbtq-youth-mental-health/>
- Black & LGBTQ: Approaching Intersectional Conversations
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/black-lgbtq-approaching-intersectional-conversations/>
- Religion and Coming Out Issues for African Americans
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/religion-and-coming-out-issues-for-african-americans>

Supporting Asian American Pacific Islander LGBTQ2IA+ youth:

- Coming Out: Living Authentically as LGBTQ Asian and Pacific Islander Americans
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/coming-out-living-authentically-as-lgbtq-asian-and-pacific-islander-america>
- Religion and Coming Out Issues for Asian Pacific Americans
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/religion-and-coming-out-issues-for-asian-pacific-americans>

Additional Resources to Support LGBTQ2IA+ Youth

Juvenile Justice & Systems-Involved:

- Serving LGBT2SQ children and youth in the child welfare system (Canada)
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/serving-lgbt2sq-children-and-youth-child-welfare-system>
- National Recommended Best Practices for Serving LGBT Homeless Youth (United States)
<http://www.nclrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/national-recommended-best-practices-for-lgbt-homeless-youth.pdf>

Mental Health & Medical Care:

- The Trevor Project: 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health (United States)
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>
- Queering Mental Health Supports in Canada: A Research Report (Canada)
<https://egale.ca/awareness/qmh/>
- American Psychological Association's Best Practices for Mental Health Facilities Working With LGBT Clients <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/promoting-good-practices.aspx>
- It Gets Better: A Mental Health Tool for LGBTQ+ Youth
<https://itgetsbetter.org/mental-health-lgbtq-imi/>

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Supporting LGBTQ2IA+ Inclusive Schools & School Policies :

- Equality Florida - Safe and Healthy Schools
https://eqfl.org/safe_schools
- Guidance for LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum Standards for Educators - GLSEN
<http://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/creating-lgbt-inclusive-lessons>
- GLSEN Model Laws and School Policies <https://www.glsen.org/model-laws-and-policies>
- Lambda Legal: Know Your Rights for LGBTQ Teens and Young Adults
<https://legacy.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights>
- Safe Schools: Cultivating Respect. The Top Ten Ways to Make Schools Safe for All Students:
<https://straightforequality.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/cultivating-respect-pflag.pdf>
- Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 (by ACLU, Gender Spectrum, HRC, NCLR, NEA)
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/schools-in-transition-a-guide-for-supporting-transgender-students-in-k-12-s>
- Still In Every Class In Every School - Report on School Climate in Canada
<https://egale.ca/awareness/still-in-every-class/>
- Trevor Project: Is Your School LGBTQ-Affirming
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/is-your-school-lgbtq-affirming/>
- Welcoming Schools
<https://welcomingschools.org/resources>
- You are You Project: Resource List: <https://www.youareyouproject.com/helpful-organizations>

Educational and Programming Resources:

- AMAZE: Educator's Toolkits - LGBTQ
<https://amaze.org/educators/toolkits/lgbtq/>
- Ready, Set, Respect: GLSEN's Elementary School Toolkit:
<https://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/safeschools/Resources/GLSEN%20Gay%20Lesbian%20Straight%20Education%20Network/Ready%20Set%20Respect.pdf>
- Human Rights Campaign Welcoming Schools K-3 Lessons and Resources
<https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/welcoming-schools/documents/WS-Why-Say-Gay-K-3-Lessons-Resources.pdf>
- It Gets Better: EduGuides
<https://itgetsbetter.org/eduguides/>

Inclusive Terminology Glossaries:

- GLAAD Media Reference Guide Glossary of Terms: LGBTQ Terms
<https://glaad.org/reference/terms/>
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide Glossary of Terms: Transgender
<https://glaad.org/reference/trans-terms/>
<https://glaad.org/guia-para-la-cobertura-mediatica-de-personas-transgenero/> (en espanol)
- It Gets Better Project - LGBTQ+ Glossary

GENDER IDENTITY POSITION STATEMENT

Resources to Support Parents/Caregivers

- HRC: Supporting Your Gender Nonconforming Child
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/supporting-your-young-gender-nonconforming-child>
- PFLAG: Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays
<https://pflag.org/>
- Supporting Your Gender Nonconforming Child
<https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets/SupportingYourGenderNonConformingChild.pdf>