

## **MSLA Resources**

[Article on the usage of gender neutral pronouns](#)

**\*\*REMEMBER: Words on these lists may change. Some may become outdated or be considered offensive. Language is fluid, so make sure you check beforehand when presenting or discussing these topics with others.**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>A person's assignment at birth, based upon primary and secondary sex characteristics (genitalia, breasts, body hair, chromosomes, hormones, etc.) as male, female, or intersex.</b>
<b>Gender Identity</b>	<b>A person's inner understanding of the gender(s) to which they belong or with which they identify. This is each person's unique knowing or feeling, and is separate from a person's physical body or appearance (although often related).</b>
<b>Orientation</b>	<b>A pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions. A sense of one's personal and social identity based on attractions and the behaviors expressing them, oftentimes linked to the gender(s) of the person one feels these attractions towards</b>
<b>Attraction</b>	<b>Feelings and desires a person has that may cause them to desire to engage in physically, sexually intimate behavior AND/OR</b>

	relationally, emotionally intimate behavior (flirting, dating, and marriage).
<b>Lesbian</b>	A person who identifies as a woman, and who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender and/or sex.
<b>Gay</b>	A person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted primarily to members of the same gender and/or sex. (Usually used by people who identify as men, though some women also use this term about themselves.)
<b>Bisexual</b>	An individual who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and sexually attracted to more than one gender and/or sex.
<b>Queer</b>	a sexual orientation that is not straight, without indicating the genders of the queer person or the people they are attracted to. Some people prefer queer because it doesn't reference the gender binary, and some people prefer queer because it can expansively include attraction to people of a range of genders (used similarly to "pansexual" and "bisexual"). 3) Historically and currently used by some as a slur targeting those perceived to transgress "norms" of sexual orientation and/or gender expression, but for others, a word that has been reclaimed as a positive and affirmative part of their identity.

<b>Pansexual</b>	A person who is emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted toward persons of all gender identities and biological sexes. The concept of pansexuality deliberately rejects the gender binary, the "notion of two genders, and indeed of specific sexual orientations."
<b>Straight</b>	A person who is primarily emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted toward persons of a different gender and biological sex. This is another term for heterosexual.
<b>Homosexual</b>	A person who is primarily emotionally, spiritually, physically, and/or sexually attracted toward persons of the same gender and biological sex. This term is now considered outdated and too clinical, and is not in wide usage when people describe their own identities.
<b>Demisexual</b>	A person who only feels sexual attraction to someone with whom they have an emotional bond.
<b>Asexual</b>	A person who does not experience sexual attraction. While they may not experience

	<p>sexual attraction, a person may still engage in dating, sexual activity, or other behaviors.</p>
<p><b>Transgender or Trans</b></p>	<p>An umbrella term for anyone who knows themselves to be a gender that is different than the gender they were assigned at birth. Some trans people may have an alternate gender identity that is neither male nor female, and for some people their gender identity may vary at different points in their lives. Some transgender people modify their bodies through medical means, and some do not. Common terms that people use about themselves are transman, transwoman, and man or woman of transgender experience.</p>
<p><b>Transsexual</b></p>	<p>A person who feels that his or her gender identity does not match his or her assigned biological sex. Some transsexuals, though not all, have sex reassignment surgery and/or take hormones to make their bodies look more traditionally male or female. This term, as well as male-to-female (MTF) and female-to-male (FTM) are now considered outdated and offensive by many and should not be used unless claimed by the individual.</p>
<p><b>Gender Non-Conforming</b></p>	<p>A gender identity used to describe people whose gender expression does not align with</p>



	societal expectations based on their perceived gender.
<b>Genderqueer</b>	A gender identity used by a person that self-defines their gender as queer or non-normative. Someone whose chosen gender identity is neither man nor woman, is between or beyond gender, rejects binary gender, is some combination of genders.
<b>Cisgender</b>	A person who is comfortable in the gender they were assigned at birth. It is used to contrast with “transgender” on the gender spectrum. Cisgender has its origin in the Latin-derived prefix cis, meaning “on the same side.”

<b>Intersex</b>	A general term used to refer to people who have atypical sexual or reproductive anatomy and biology. Intersex is not a single category – many forms of intersex exist and within each form, there may be substantial variation as well. Variations may include the reproductive organs such as the testicles, penis, vulva, clitoris, and ovaries, chromosomes, and hormone levels, all of which can result in additional variations in secondary sexual characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breast development, hip to waist ratio and stature. The term intersex displaced “hermaphroditism”, which is now considered
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	<p>offensive, as knowledge and understanding of sex development has increased. Intersex continues to be widely accepted as an umbrella term referring to biological diversity affecting sexual and reproductive anatomy.</p>
<p><b>Gender Transition</b></p>	<p>A person's transition can look and feel different; there is not one way to transition. Transition includes some or all of the following: cultural, legal, and medical adjustments; telling one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; electrolysis or laser hair removal; hormone therapy; different forms of surgery including but not limited to chest and genital surgery. Gender transition is not a linear process, and is often influenced by one's access to information, community, and financial resources</p>
<p><b>Homophobia</b></p>	<p>The irrational fear of love, affection, or sexual behavior between people of the same gender. Expressed as negative feelings, erasure, attitudes, actions, and institutional discrimination against those perceived as non-heterosexuals, or the fear of being perceived as non-heterosexual (internalized homophobia)</p>

<p><b>Pronouns</b></p>	<p>An important way to respect trans people is to refer to them with their gender pronouns. Some people want to be referred to as he / him / his, some as she / her / hers, some as a combination. Others want to be referred to with alternative/gender-neutral pronouns, such as ze or xie (“zee”) / hir (“heer”), or they / them / theirs (“Max is doing well. I saw hir yesterday, and ze said to say hi to you”). Some prefer not to use pronouns and all and only use their proper name (“I saw Max yesterday in class. I thought Max gave great answers to the professor’s questions, and I thought Max’s questions were great too”). It is always best to ask someone, “What is your gender pronoun</p>
<p><b>Biphobia</b></p>	<p>The irrational fear of love, affection, or sexual behavior of people who identify as bisexual. Expressed as negative feelings, erasure, attitudes, actions, and institutional discrimination against those perceived as bi-sexual, or the fear of being perceived as bi-sexual.</p>
<p><b>Transphobia</b></p>	<p>Irrational fear or hatred of people who break or blur gender roles and sex characteristics, which exists in both the heterosexual and gay communities. Expressed as negative feelings, erasure, attitudes, actions, and institutional discrimination against those perceived as transgender or gender non-conforming, or the fear of being perceived as transgender or gender non-conforming.</p>

<b>Heteronormative</b>	<b>The social, cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege heterosexuality as the natural, normal sexual orientation.</b>
<b>Cis-Normative</b>	<b>The social, cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege cisgender experiences and identities as the natural, normal gender identity.</b>

<b>Ally</b>	<b>A person who actively supports and advocates for people who belong to marginalized, silenced, or less privileged groups without actually being a member of those groups. This person will often challenge or confront systems of oppression.</b>
<b>GENDER EXPRESSION</b>	Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice and emphasizing, de-emphasizing or changing their bodies' characteristics. Gender expression is not an indicator of sexual orientation.

## **Massachusetts High School Students and Sexual Orientation Results of the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

The Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS) is conducted every two years by the Massachusetts Department of Education with funding from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey monitors behaviors of high school students that are related to the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth and adults in the United States.

The 2011 MYRBS was conducted in 54 randomly selected public high schools. In total, 2729 students in grades 9 - 12 participated in this voluntary and anonymous survey. Because of the high student and school response rates, the results of this survey can be generalized to apply to public high school students across Massachusetts.

### **Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Students**

The MYRBS found that:

- Ø 7.0 percent of students surveyed described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- Ø 9.7 percent of all students described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual *and/or* reported same-sex sexual contact.

### **Students at Risk**

Students who described themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual were significantly more likely than their peers to report attacks, suicide attempts and drug and alcohol use. When compared to peers, this group was:

- Ø **over seven times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year**

**Ø over twice as likely to have skipped school in the past month because of feeling unsafe**

**Ø over twice as likely to have been injured or threatened with a weapon at school**

<b>Reported Behaviors</b>	<b>GLB Students*</b>	<b>Other Students</b>
Attempted suicide in the past year	34.1%	4.6%
Required medical attention as a result of a suicide attempt	8.3%	1.7%
Skipped school in the past month because of feeling unsafe on route to or at school	9.9%	4.4%
Was threatened/injured with a weapon at school in past year	15.2%	6.0%
Was bullied at school in the past year	33.5%	17.0%
Has ever been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant	13.0%	4.7%

### **GLSEN School Climate Survey - 2015**

- 95.8% of LGBTQ students heard other types of homophobic remarks (e.g., “dyke” or “faggot”); 58.8% heard this type of language frequently or often.
- 95.7% of LGBTQ students heard negative remarks about gender expression (not acting “masculine enough” or “feminine enough”); 62.9% heard these remarks frequently or often.
- 85.7% of LGBTQ students heard negative remarks specifically about transgender people, like “tranny” or “he/she;” 40.5% heard them frequently or often.
- 56.2% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff, and 63.5% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from teachers and other school staff.
- 66.2% of LGBTQ students reported personally experiencing any LGBT related discriminatory policies or practices at school (see below), and almost three-fourths (74.0%) said other students had experienced these policies and practices at school.
- 29.8% of students reported being disciplined for public displays of affection that were not disciplined among non-LGBTQ students.
- 22.2% of students had been prevented from wearing clothes considered inappropriate based on their legal sex.
- 16.7% of students were prohibited from discussing or writing about LGBT topics in school assignments, and 16.3% were prohibited from doing so in school extracurricular activities.
- Some policies particularly targeted transgender students: –50.9% of transgender students had been prevented from using their preferred name or pronoun (19.9% of LGBTQ students overall), and –60.0% of transgender students had been required to use a bathroom or locker room of their legal sex (22.6% of students overall).
- 71.2% of LGBTQ students reported that their schools engaged in some form of gendered practice in school activities (e.g., graduation

attire, homecoming courts, school photographs).

LGBTQ students who experienced higher levels of victimization because of their sexual orientation and/or gender expression:

- –Were almost three times as likely to have missed school in the past month than those who experienced lower levels (59.6% vs. 20.8%);
- –Had lower GPAs than students who were less often harassed (2.9 vs. 3.3);
- –Were twice as likely to report that they did not plan to pursue any postsecondary education (e.g., college or trade school; 9.5% vs. 5.4%);
- –Were more likely to have been disciplined at school (52.1% vs. 32.7%);
- –Had lower self-esteem and school belonging and higher levels of depression. • 42.5% of LGBTQ students who reported that they did not plan to finish high school, or were not sure if they would finish, indicated that they were considering dropping out because of the harassment they faced at school.

### **Statistics on trans and GNC youth**

#### **HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL CREATE A HOSTILE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

- While in grades K-12, transgender individuals reported high rates of harassment (78 percent), physical assault (35 percent), and sexual violence (12 percent).[4]
  - Ninety percent of transgender students have heard negative remarks about their gender expression in school. Thirty-nine percent reported hearing school staff make similar comments in the past year. Very infrequently will students report these incidences, and school staff rarely intervenes. Only a third of students felt that school staff would address the situation properly if they did report the incident.[5]
  - Forty-four percent of transgender students felt unsafe at school as a result of their gender expression and identity. Due to this fear, 30 percent had skipped at least one day of school in the past month.[6]
- Despite a hostile school environment, one study found that the transgender community is highly



educated. Compared to the general population, transgender people reported higher rates of having some college, a college degree, or a graduate degree as their highest education attainment.[4]

## **DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IS UBIQUITOUS AND INSTITUTIONALIZED**

- Over half of transgender individuals who “come out” or discuss their gender identity with their families face significant rejection from their families; one-fifth have experienced violence at the hands of a family member because of their gender identity.<sup>4</sup>
  - Only 16 US states, the District of Columbia, and 150 cities and counties have explicit non-discrimination laws that include gender identity and expression.<sup>1</sup> Without such laws, transgender people may be denied employment, housing, and access to appropriate restrooms on the grounds of their gender identity.
- Government-issued identification, legal forms, and intake forms at health care providers often do not accommodate transgender identity, forcing transgender individuals to inaccurately identify themselves and their needs.[4][7]
- Almost half of transgender people have experienced adverse employment outcomes (being fired, not hired, or not promoted) because of their identity, while 90 percent have experienced discrimination on the job.<sup>4</sup> Transgender people are barred from serving openly in the military. [8]
- Seventy-three percent of transgender patients believe they will be treated differently by medical personnel due to their gender identity and expression. This fear can make patients hesitant to seek out health care, even when necessary. [9]
- Transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals face the risk of harassment by staff, law enforcement, and the public when they use public restrooms, locker rooms, or changing rooms. [10]
- Transgender individuals rarely see positive representations of themselves in popular culture. In an analysis of movie releases from 6 major studios, none contained a transgender character in 2013. Depictions that mock transgender identity are frequent. [11]

### **Specific risks for Trans youth of color**

## **TRANSGENDER YOUTH OF COLOR FACE INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION AT ALARMING RATES**

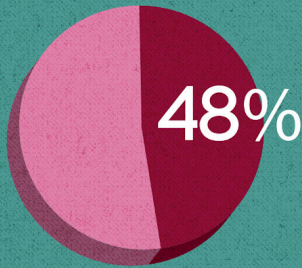
- Transgender youth of color experience some of the highest levels of adversity in their daily lives due to the intersectionality of transphobia and racism. [12]
- Transgender youth of color are harassed for their gender identity and expression as often as the general transgender population, however, hearing racist language from school staff (54 percent) and fellow students (23 percent) puts additional stress on these students. As a result, transgender communities of color have lower levels of educational attainment in comparison to their white counterparts.[12] [13]
- In one study it was found that transgender youth of color faced many stressors such as not having a stable home (18 percent), being involved in sex work (59 percent), non-consensual relationships (52 percent), unemployment (63 percent), and challenges securing healthcare (41 percent).[12]

- Among homeless transgender youth, 62 percent are black and 22 percent are Latina/o.[5]
- Transgender women of color face the highest rates of violence and abuse. In 2012, there were 25 LGBTQ-related homicides. Half of these homicides were against transgender women, many of whom were women of color.[14]

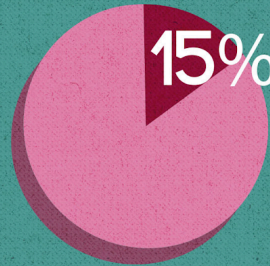


# QUEER YOUTH OF COLOR

1 IN 3 LGBTQ PEOPLE IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS PEOPLE OF COLOR.



OF LGBTQ STUDENTS OF COLOR EXPERIENCED VERBAL HARASSMENT BECAUSE OF BOTH THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THEIR RACE OR ETHNICITY.

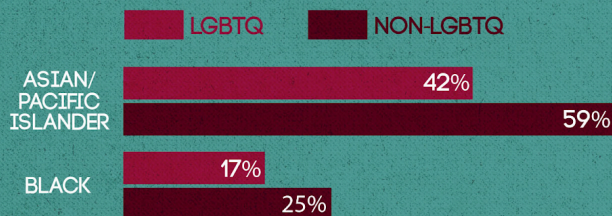


HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY HARASSED OR ASSAULTED BASED ON BOTH OF THESE ASPECTS OF THEIR IDENTITY.

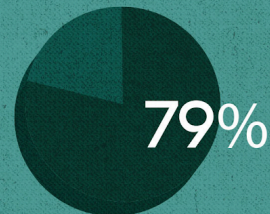
13%

MORE LIKELY FOR BLACK LGBTQ YOUTH TO BE SENT TO DETENTION OR SUSPENDED, THAN NON-BLACK LGBTQ YOUTH

## COLLEGE COMPLETION RATES



IN THEIR MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL YEARS...

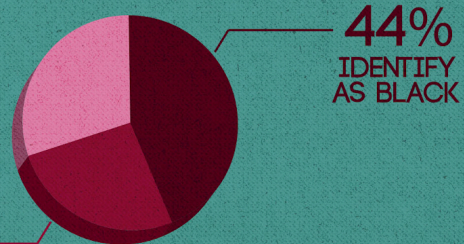


OF LGBTQ YOUTH OF COLOR REPORTED THAT THEY HAD INTERACTIONS WITH SECURITY OR LAW ENFORCEMENT, COMPARED TO 63% OF WHITE LGBTQ YOUTH.

20-40% OF ALL HOMELESS YOUTH ARE LGBTQ

AMONG THEM...

26% IDENTIFY AS LATINO



FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
GO TO [TRANSSTUDENT.ORG/GRAPHICS](http://TRANSSTUDENT.ORG/GRAPHICS)



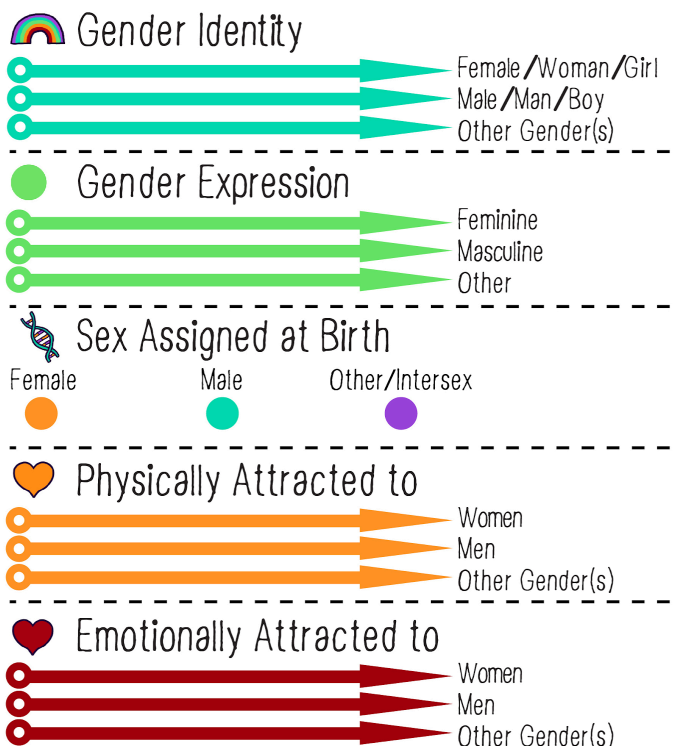
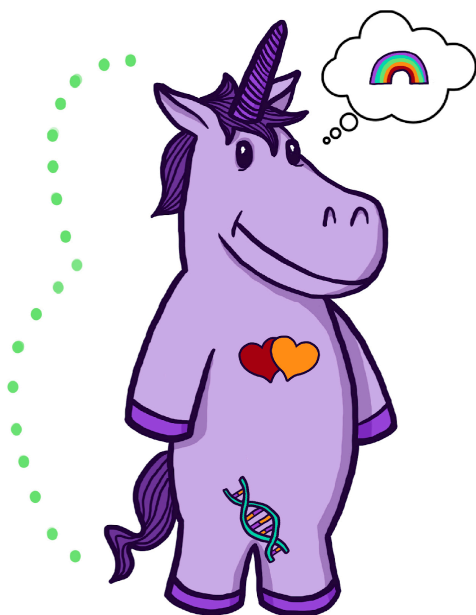
INFOGRAPHIC BY LANDYN PAN

SOURCES: GALLUP.COM, GLSEN, LAMBDA LEGAL, THE WILLIAMS INSTITUTE, AND CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS



# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore