SAFE ZONE LGBTQ+ ALLY TRAINING LEVEL 1

Creating a positive and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM
Introductions

• Name
• Pronouns
• Affiliation
• What brought you here?
Level I Objectives

Knowledge
• Differentiate between concepts of sex, gender, & sexual orientation

Awareness
• Identify/recognize heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions
• Understand LGBTQ+ identity development and the coming out process

Skills
• Use strategies to make your class and workplace more inclusive
• Respond to bias

Action
• Join a visible network of people who promote LGBTQ inclusion
The ally spectrum

An ally is a member of the majority group who rejects the dominant ideology and advocates *with and for* an oppressed population.
Safe Space Agreement

- Respect
- Ask Questions
- Listen
- Learning leaves, names stay
What is a Safe Zone?

- A welcoming and supportive environment for LGBTQ students, faculty and staff on campus
- Stickers/signs help create a visible network of supporters
- Goal is a campus culture that is accepting of people with all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions
CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY
Lesbian: A woman who is sexually attracted to other women

Bisexual: The space between hetero and homosexual

Queer: An umbrella term from those who wish to not categorize sex, sexuality, or gender

Gay: A man who is sexually attracted to other men

Transgender: People whose gender identity, expression, or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth

Asexual: Someone who does not experience sexual attraction

Intersex: A person who is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit the typical female or male definitions

Modified from graphic created by Kayley Weinberg, 2014. www.now.org/
LGBTQIA

- Sex – assigned at birth based on anatomy
- Gender – result of socially constructed ideas of behavior, actions and roles performed based on sex
- Orientation – core sense of attraction. Avoid preference
Biological Sex

- Biological or medical classification based on genitalia, chromosomes, reproductive organs
- Assigned at birth as Male or Female (in most countries). This binary does not always reflect reality.
- Intersex – when anatomy and chromosomes are not congruent or are not consistent with M/F designations. Avoid hermaphrodite
- In 2013 Germany introduced an indeterminate sex on birth certificates

Sex is expressed physically in many ways
Gender

- Gender identity – one’s core sense of being male or female or both or neither
- Gender expression – one’s outward presentations and behavior, how others perceive a person’s gender
- Intersection of sex, gender identity and gender expression produces an authentic sense of gender

Gender is a spectrum of identity and expression
Gender

- Cisgender
- Transgender (avoid *transgendered*)
- Genderqueer
  - Genderfluid
  - Pangender
  - Agender
  - Third gender*
  - Nonbinary

Third gender is gaining legal recognition worldwide
Orientation

- The type of sexual, romantic, emotional attraction one feels for others, often based on gender
  - Gay
  - Lesbian
  - Bisexual / pansexual
  - Heterosexual / straight
  - *Homosexual* - Avoid
  - Asexual

Orientation is a spectrum of attraction
Sex, Gender and Orientation
A multi-dimensional space

- Sex, gender, and orientation are 3 different things
- Each is experienced and expressed in a spectrum of ways
- They are not binary or fixed, not necessarily congruent with societal expectations
LGBTQ IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN A NORMATIVE CULTURE
Normative assumptions

Normative – adj. relating to an ideal standard or being based on what is considered the correct way of doing something

Heteronormativity – the assumption that all individuals are heterosexual

Cisnormativity - the assumption that all individuals are cisgender
Identity development process

Typical Child

Heteronormativity
Cisnormativity

All is according to “plan”

Healthy heterosexual & cicongender Identity... and student, coworker, professor, sibling...
Identity development process

LGBTQ Child

Heteronormativity
Cisnormativity

Hostility

LGBT Connections, Knowledge

Healthy LGBTQ identity

I’m Confused...

I’m isolated, I’m “other”

I’m “other” but not alone

Student, coworker, professor, sibling...
Integration and intersection
COMING OUT
Coming Out

**Coming out** – the process of accepting one’s sex, orientation, or gender identity, and sharing it with others

- **In the Closet** – describes a person who has not disclosed their gender identity or sexual orientation
  - Can be “out” in one context and “closeted” in another
- **Outing** – involuntary disclosure of gender identity or sexual orientation
Coming out

- It is a nonlinear process
- It is not a one-time event - it is ongoing, sometimes daily
- Everyone has different experiences and feelings
- It’s not safe (or desirable) for everyone in every situation – it’s a personal decision
Coming out stars
When someone comes out to you

• Thank them for their trust
• Respect their confidentiality
• Let them know this does not change how you feel about them
• Ask how you can support them
• Commit yourself as an ally
• Learn and use the accepted terminology
• Learn about the LGBTQ community and their world
INCLUSION STRATEGIES
Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment

- Respond to Bias
- Use Inclusive language
- Create an inclusive classroom
- Be an ally
RESPONDING TO BIAS
Responding to bias

When you hear an inappropriate (biased) comment or joke

- **Assume**: An LGBTQ+ individual is present
- **Ask yourself**: What message do you send by not responding?
- **Think about**: The difference between an ally (or bystander) responding and the target individual responding
How would you respond?

A student makes a homophobic joke in class
Responding to bias

- What do you mean by that?
- I’m surprised to hear you say something like that.
- I feel uncomfortable when I hear you talk about a person/group that way.
- I know you meant it as a joke, but I find it offensive.
How would you respond

A woman noticed a wedding photo in the office of a gay colleague. She commented to co-workers, “I don’t care if he’s gay, but does he have to flaunt his sexuality?”
INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
Reframing normative assumptions with inclusive language

How would you reframe these normative assumptions?

- What does your wife / husband do?
- Do you have a boyfriend / girlfriend?

- Use inclusive terms like date, partner, spouse
- If you make a mistake, apologize.

“Dear Dr. & Mrs. Rivera...”
(from an invitation)
Inclusive language - pronouns

Pronouns

• Gender inclusive pronouns, e.g., They/them/their

• Introduce yourself with name and pronoun

• Ask if you don’t know

• If you really don’t know, singular “they” is gender inclusive
Inclusive language

Words We're Watching

A Gender-Neutral Honorific

Mx: Words We're Watching

The gender-neutral Mx. is used as a title for those who do not identify as being of a particular gender, or for people who simply don't want to be identified by gender.

'Mx.' is a gender-neutral honorific for those who don't wish to be identified by gender. Though the earliest print evidence dates to 1977, the word has only recently become popular.
Inclusive language recap

• Learn and use the correct terminology
• Use the correct pronouns (see handout)
• Use inclusive relationship terms
  • Date, spouse, partner
  • Use the same terminology the other person uses
• If you make a mistake, apologize
• If someone else makes a mistake, correct unobtrusively
INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM TIPS
Syllabus Statements

• Diversity Statement
  • Expressing your commitment, your expectations

• Safe Zone Statement
  • Expressing your support
  • Makes you more visible as an ally / supporter

• Name/Pronoun Statement
  • Expressing our commitment to using lived names and pronouns

What is your commitment to classroom inclusion?
Names and Pronouns

• Bring a roster with last names only; ask students for first names
• Provide an opportunity for students to tell you their pronouns
  • Use get-to-know you index cards
  • Or use an online survey
More Classroom Inclusion

• Be visible as a supporter
  • Safe Zone Sticker on your door, in your classroom, on your computer

• Highlight contributions of LGBTQ+ engineers

• Always assume there’s an LGBTQ+ student in the class

• Respond to bias when you observe it
More Tips for the Classroom and Beyond

- Highlight LGBTQ in Engineering
  - Contributions of LGBTQ+ engineers
How to be an ally / supporter

• Share what you learn here today
• Use proper terminology & inclusive language
• Respond to bias
• Attend some LGBTQ group meetings on campus & bring a friend!
• Be visible - display your Safe Zone Sticker!
• Continue to learn, grow, share, support
Resources

• Dean of students
• Wellness center
• LGBTQ Resource Center
• An out faculty member
• Campus Title IX officer (for now)
Thank you!

lgbtq.asee.org

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