

6TH ANNUAL

DIVERSITY ABROAD CONFERENCE

April 7-10, 2018 • Miami, FL



Exploring the Complexities of Advocating for Transgender, Gender Expansive & Intersex Students in Education Abroad

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Overview

- Relevant terms and concepts
 - Who are TGI communities?
 - Intersectionality
 - Pronouns
- Best practices for advising TGI students
- Organizational and institutional policies and practices
- Case studies
- Group discussion



Who are TGI Communities?

- TGI
 - Transgender
 - Gender Expansive (genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, questioning, Two Spirit, agender)
 - Intersex

Transgender

Transgender:

- Adjective used most often as an umbrella term and frequently abbreviated to “trans”
- Describes a wide range of identities and experiences of people whose gender identity and/or expression differs from conventional expectations based on their assigned sex at birth

Gender Expansive

Gender Expansive:

- An umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture's commonly held definitions of gender
- Gender expansive individuals include those who identify as transgender, as well as anyone whose gender is seen to be stretching the surrounding society's notion of gender

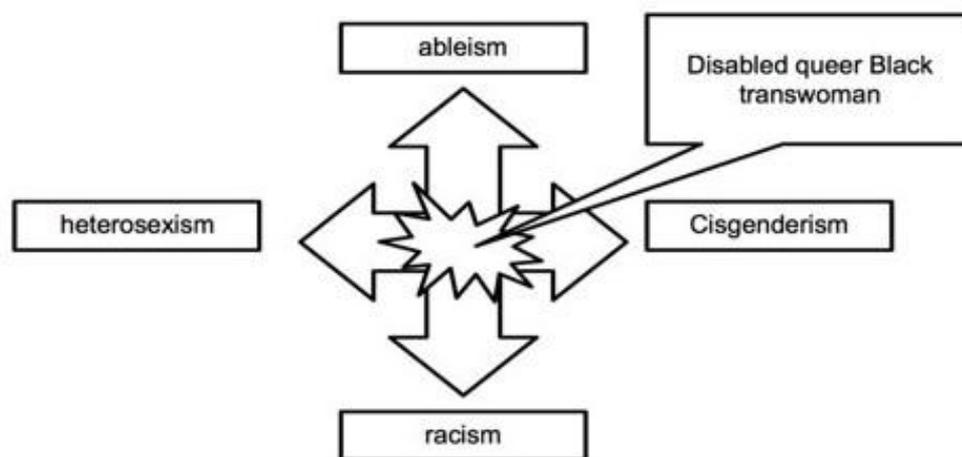
Intersex

Intersex:

- Adjective used describe the experience of naturally developing primary or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female
- An umbrella term with around 20 variations
- Many visibly Intersex people are mutilated in infancy and early childhood by doctors to make their sex characteristics conform to society's idea of what normal bodies should look like

Intersectionality

A term coined by law professor **Kimberlé Crenshaw** in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities.



Pronouns

“Often, people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on the person’s appearance or name. These assumptions are not always correct, and **the act of making an assumption (even if correct) sends a potentially harmful message**—that people have to look a certain way to demonstrate the gender that they are or are not.

Using someone’s correct personal pronouns is a way to respect them and create an inclusive environment, just as using a person’s name can be a way to respect them.”

www.mypronouns.org

Best Practices for Advising

- **Finding the right program**

- Legal protections in host country
- Cultural views
- Housing
- Managing expectations

- **Immigration Concerns**

- Passport and visa issues
- Airport security
- “Gender matching”

Best Practices for Advising

- Requesting that all students disclose their gender identity
 - Normalizing the disclosure of Personal Gender Pronouns (PGPs) and lived names (ex: advising intake forms)
- Maintaining privacy with gender identity information
- Misgendering (do not make assumptions about people's gender identities)
- Access to hormone medications abroad
 - Will this be covered by the student's insurance?

Best Practices for Advising

- Develop a climate of inclusivity
 - Office and campus culture
 - Develop forms that do not limit gender identity
 - Options for students to use their self-identified gender
- Vet host families & develop inclusive housing policies
 - Challenge systems of gender segregation when possible

Best Practices for Advising

- **Consistent and ongoing TGI allyship**
 - Education Abroad faculty, staff, partners, etc.
 - Know when to listen and when to speak*
 - Don't expect cookies*
 - Keep working when TGI students are not looking*

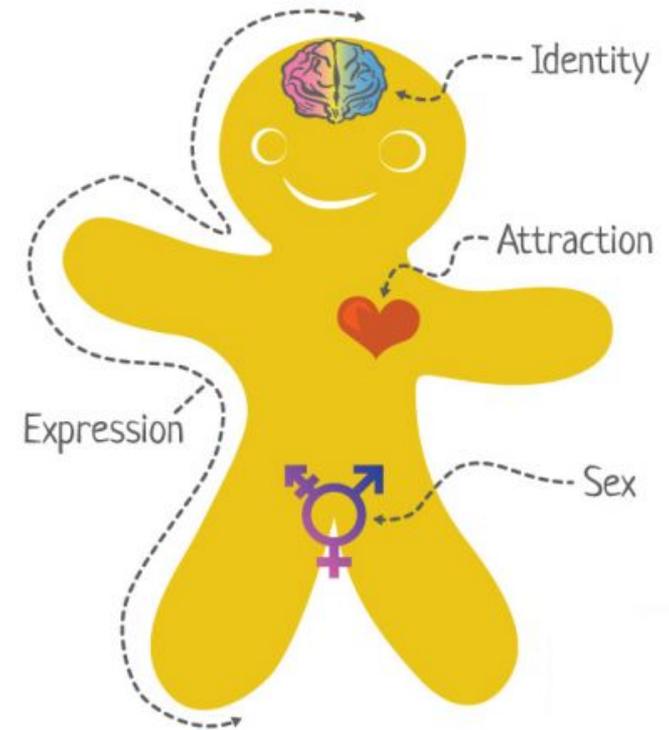
*adapted from an article by Mari Brighe posted on autostraddle.com

Best Practices for Advising

- Collaborating with other offices on-campus
 - Inform counseling center of participants
 - Conducting promotional events in conjunction with LGBTQIA/Pride Centers or student organizations
 - Include TGI information in pre-departure orientations and other materials
- Encourage students to be open and honest about their concerns and expectations
- Being prepared is the key to a successful program
- Include TGI content and care in staff and faculty orientations

Best Practices for Advising

- Respect the confidentiality of anyone who discloses their gender identity
- Don't assume you know what someone's sexual orientation is based on their gender identity
 - TGI folks can be LGB+ or straight identified
- When required by law to document gender or name, request their 'legal name' and 'legal gender'



Organizational Policies and Practices

- **Horizons (Online Enrollment Software)**
 - Gender identity, Personal Gender Pronouns (PGPs), and housing preferences information in our faculty-led programs' enrollment forms
 - Lived name vs. legal name in all reports
 - Passport sex marker vs. self-reported gender identity in staff-requested reports depending on how the information is being used

Organizational Policies and Practices

Gender Identity Selection*

Transgender, intersex, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, questioning, Two Spirit, and agender students are valued members of the UC Davis Study Abroad community. In meeting the needs of the Study Abroad student, UC Davis Study Abroad will recognize and respect the gender identity the student has established with UC Davis Study Abroad, and staff will not ask any more information than is required to meet the student's needs.

Do you identify as one of the gender identities listed above?

Gender Identity Selection Yes

Gender Identity Selection No

Enter Your Self-Reported Gender Identity*

Please enter your self-reported gender identity.

Personal Gender Pronouns

Please enter your personal gender pronouns.

Example: They/Them/Theirs

Organizational Policies and Practices

Personal Gender Pronouns Release*

Do you grant permission for your personal gender pronouns to be released to Study Abroad partners and faculty for program coordination purposes?

Personal Gender Pronouns Release Yes

Personal Gender Pronouns Release No

Gender Identity Release*

Do you grant permission for your self-reported gender identity to be released to Study Abroad partners and faculty for program coordination purposes? Please note that if you select “No,” we may not be able to accommodate your Housing Preferences below.

Gender Identity Release Yes

Gender Identity Release No

Housing Preferences*

The standard practice for housing arrangements on UC Davis Study Abroad programs is to pair roommates according to sex as reported by the UC Davis Student Information System in the case of UC Davis students, or as is self-reported by students from other schools. If you would like to discuss the possibility of an arrangement different from the standard practice, please select “Yes” below. Please note that we cannot guarantee housing preferences will be accommodated.

Housing Preferences Yes

Housing Preferences No

Organizational Policies and Practices

- Ongoing conversations between TGI students and Study Abroad staff regarding housing accommodations
- Working with international vendors and providers to encourage inclusive housing options
 - Study Abroad covering the cost for single rooms if no other accommodations are available



Organizational Policies and Practices

- Collaborating with the director of the LGBTQIA Resource Center and a representative from Student Housing
- Faculty training about supporting TGI students from the director of the LGBTQIA Resource Center



Institutional Policies and Practices

- **Gender identity questions when applying to UC Davis (September 2014):**
 - How do you describe yourself?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Trans Male/Trans Man
 - Trans Female/Trans Woman
 - Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming
 - Different Identity (please specify)
 - What sex were you assigned at birth, such as on an original birth certificate?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Decline to state
- **Banner Student Information System**
 - Changes to Banner gender fields
 - UC Davis will change a student's sex marker in Banner if they receive medical documentation

Institutional Policies and Practices

- **Student Community Center (LGBTQIA Resource Center)**
 - “Out List” of LGBTQIA UC Davis faculty, staff and graduate students
- **LGBTQIA-focused staff trainings**
 - “LGBTQ Inclusion in the Workplace” (Staff Development and Professional Services class)
 - “Foundations in LGBTQIA Allyship” (LGBTQIA Resource Center)
 - “Ally as a Verb: Deepening LGBTQIA Allyship” (LGBTQIA Resource Center)



Case Studies

Case Study #1

As David's study abroad advisor, he comes to you expressing an extreme desire and enthusiasm for studying in the Middle East, citing an interest in archeology and Middle Eastern culture. David, who appears male to you, confides the he is actually transgender and has not completed the transition process. David is known on campus as male, expresses as male, and uses he/him/his pronouns to identify himself. He expects to participate in his off-campus study program as a male as well. He wants to know if this will present any problems?

Consider the following questions as they apply to this case study:

- What are the issues involved?
- What resources are available to help find a resolution to the situation?
- How should you proceed?

Case Study #2

As the on-site director of a study abroad program you are preparing for an overnight group excursion. The housing on this excursion will be dormitory style with rooms segregated by gender. You have had both male and female students approach you with concerns about which room Suzi, a male-to-female transgender student on the program, will be staying. All the students say they like Suzi but are uncomfortable with the idea of sharing their living space and bathroom with her. The places where you will be staying do not have options for additional rooms.

Consider the following questions as they apply to this case study:

- What are the issues involved?
- What resources are available to help find a resolution to the situation?
- How should you proceed?

Case Study #3

You are the co-leader of a service-learning program in Jamaica over spring break. During the second day of the program, several students approach you and express concern about one of the participants, Cliff. They indicate that Cliff has been the victim of verbal harassment by locals and fear that this may be due to Cliff being genderqueer. Cliff has not made any statements to you, the other leader, or any students regarding his gender identity.

Consider the following questions as they apply to this case study:

- What are the issues involved?
- What resources are available to help find a resolution to the situation?
- How should you proceed?

“We grow up with little to no positive representation of our appearances and identities. We are constantly belittled and experience extreme rates of harassment, discrimination and violence. Representation for us isn’t superficial, it can be life-saving. People need to know that we exist. We know that we are beautiful—the world just needs to catch up with us.”

- Alok Vaid-Menon (@alokvmenon)

Thank you for joining us!

Want to continue the conversation? Contact us:

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