Everything OUTdoors Done Right

INCLUDING OUR LGBTQ+ YOUTH IN 4-H PROGRAMMING

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Our Time Today...

- Introduce myself and my role at OSU
- Share scenario and best practices for supporting transgender and nonbinary youth
- Briefly share legal precedence
- Q&A
Scenario

A 4-H county camp is contacted about a ten-year-old transgender girl who wants to attend the co-ed resident camp.

- The girl has been recommended to the camp by her psychologist, and the staff has not yet had a conversation with the girl’s parents. However, she is living as a girl at school and at home.
- The camp was pleased that their camp was considered a “safe” place for the child and wants to accommodate the request but was unsure of how to meet her needs.
- The physical arrangements of the camp provide challenges to privacy while changing clothes in the cabins and in the pool shower room, which is an open space with 4 shower heads.
Which of the gendered facilities should the girl use and how should camp leaders protect her privacy?

- Youth should have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity, even with separate restroom, locker room, or changing facilities for male and female students.
- Provide a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative if the youth or her parents request, such as a privacy partition or curtain or a separate changing schedule.
- Use of a separate, non-integrated space threatens to publicly identify and marginalize the student as transgender and should only be used if the youth or her parents request it.

(GLSEN, “Model District Policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students”)

**Strategy:** ask the girl or her parents how they have dealt with gendered facilities in other settings.

The information on this page includes best practices for supporting LGBTQ+ youth and does not constitute legal advice. Make sure to contact 4-H and Extension administration for advice on what is legally allowable and defensible.

Who should be informed that the child is a transgender girl?

“It is strongly recommended that [staff] not discuss a student’s transgender status with anyone other than the student and the student’s parent(s) or legal guardian(s) including other [staff], unless the information is necessary in order to accommodate the student or ensure the student’s safety or the student has given written informed consent.”

(Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition Policy Committee, 2012)

- Only staff who need to know the girl’s identity to serve her and safeguard her wellbeing should be told.
- The girl and her parents should be the only ones who make the decision about whether she comes out to campers and staff who don’t need to know her identity.

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### What can camp leadership do to make the camp experience “safe/positive” for the child?

- **Develop strong guidelines for inclusivity and respect in camp and enforce them.**
- **Use universal design principles to make sure the camp is supportive of everyone.**
  - Recognize and respect all gender identities and expressions.
  - Ask what name and pronouns all youth want others to use and then correct yourself and others for mistakes.
  - Avoid organizing activities and structures around gender.
- **Train all staff and volunteers to support LGBTQ+ youth.**
- **Avoid assumptions about gender or sexuality.**
- **Watch for harassment, bullying, and discrimination**
  - Train staff and volunteers about how to deal with these issues.
  - Make sure all youth know who to tell and how to report issues.

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### What can the camp leadership do to make sure the other campers have a “safe/positive” experience?

- **Allow all youth to create community guidelines for respect and inclusivity of the camp.**
  - Set consistent consequences for violating policies.
  - Recognize youth who live the guidelines in an exemplary way.
- **Model respectful and inclusive behavior.**
  - Examine your own beliefs and feelings that might impede you doing so.
- **Answer questions and address comments openly and honestly when they come up.**
  - Gain background knowledge and prepare answers in advance.
- **Help youth understand any discomfort they may face.**

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How does the camp director handle questions from parents after campers return home?

- Listen to parents’ concerns and make sure they feel heard.
- Take an educational approach to:
  - Questions or misunderstandings about gender identity and expression.
  - What information about other children can be shared.
  - The variety of identities and viewpoints children are exposed to in such a camp setting and the value of diversity.
  - 4-H values and equal opportunity policies.
- Be clear and consistent in your discussion about the values and policies of 4-H.
- Keep notes on dates, times, and details of conversations and report them to the Extension office and 4-H leadership.

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How can staff deal with special needs? Medication for transitioning? Psychological needs?

- Many transgender youth are happy, healthy, and well adjusted.
- Some transgender youth and adults medically transition, but many do not want to or cannot afford to do so.
- Delivery of medication and support for psychological needs should be consistent among all children.
  - Reasons a youth needs medication or accommodations should be kept private.
- As with any child, staff or volunteers cannot exercise their own beliefs or opinions over the use of medicine or need for psychological care.

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### Protections for Transgender Youth

- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has clarified that discrimination based on gender identity in schools violates Title IX of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.
- ED, the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has confirmed that sex discrimination in schools includes discrimination based on “gender identity, gender expression, and nonconformity with gender stereotypes.”

### Federal Protections for Transgender Youth

- On July 24, 2013, the DOJ resolved a settlement with a school on behalf of a 12-year-old transgender boy who was *told to use a restroom in the nurse’s office instead of the boy’s restroom and locker room, and told he could not room with the cisgender boys on a field trip.*
  - This treatment made the student the target of awkward questions and teasing that interfered with his ability to focus at school.
- **The 2013 settlement requires the School District to:**
  - Grant the student access to the same facilities as any other male student
  - Develop transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination policies
  - Put its staff through anti-discrimination trainings
  - Undergo monitoring and reporting

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*Student v. Arcadia Unified School District*
Q&A

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Am treating needs of transgender youth differently than I would treat the same situation with a cisgender student? Why?
- Am I requiring transgender youth to provide different types of documentation than I would with cisgender students? Why?
- Am I treating disrespect of a transgender youth differently than I would disrespect of someone because of another type of identity?
- Am I segregating children based on transgender status in a way I would not do based on other identities, even if a parent asked me to do so?
- Am I helping each youth become the best possible version of themself?