

Welcome! [5 min]

Welcome everyone to the room and thank them for joining today's workshop.

- Names
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community, but we also want to be clear that we don't represent all identities or people within the community.
- Served as Co-Gender and Sexuality Coordinators at SUNY Potsdam.
- We do this work beyond SUNY Potsdam in the academic setting, in the high school setting, and in the context of research. We have given dozens and dozens of trainings on many different aspects of this community.
- Between the two of us, we have extensive knowledge regarding the current frameworks for the LGBTQI2SA+ community, as well as the historical context of the LGBTQ+ rights movement.
- As a result of these factors, we are excited to engage in this workshop with you and answer any and all questions you may have about the LGBTQI2SA+ community and facilitating dialogue around these topics.

Q: To get started, let's go around and introduce ourselves with our names, where we are logging in from, and what our Soliya Story is. If you would also like to share your pronouns with us, you are welcome to do so!"

The concept of sharing pronouns as Soliya facilitators might be new for some of you, so we would like to explain our purpose in creating space to share our pronouns. We want to create an inclusive space for our non-binary and trans community (both participants and facilitators) members who join us for the 1YC program. Modeling our pronouns as facilitators can help normalize the process and can help make others feel comfortable in sharing their pronouns with the group.

[It would also be helpful for trainers to model this by placing their pronouns as part of their Zoom name to normalize the process.]

In case some facilitators are still unclear what pronouns are, you can ask someone in the group to explain. If no one can explain, you can say something like: **"Pronouns are words that take the place of a proper noun in speech, which at times can differ from a person's sex they were assigned at birth and/or how they are perceived by society."** You can give an example if further clarity is needed.

[More on this:

- <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>.
- https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq?response_type=embed.]

Trainer/Lead/Staff: Start with your introduction then invite all facilitators to share! You can do this in a round robin fashion if time is an issue!

Why Are We Here Today [5min]

- Start to prepare for the unique dynamics of gender related discussions in 1YC.
- Explore the importance of pronouns usage and their relevance in our curriculum.
- Build a 1YC community for support through these workshops.

Gender dynamics in 1YC [20 mins]

Q: What could dynamics around gender and inclusivity look like in 1YC? Are there any examples you have from past groups?

- What issues are at the core of these dynamics?
- What can happen to groups in discussions like these?

*The LGBTQ+ statistics at SUNY Potsdam.

The gender discussion guide has seen significant edits and restructuring since the first round of 1YC to better support you in navigating the dynamics facilitators face in these discussions. We're going to give you a quick 5 minute overview of the new guide, so feel free to open it at this link and scroll around as I'm speaking [\[new link to the gender discussion guide\]](#).

There are 5 major topics, and 1 section on an especially complex dynamic.

- **Unpacking Gender** is the first major topic in the guide, and provides you with 3 mini-discussion guides, each with their own starting prompts and questions, to support your group's discussions. If your group decides to discuss "gender" but is not more specific than that, we recommend starting here at "Unpacking Gender - Angle 1: Roles and Expectations"
 - Angle 1: Roles and Expectations
 - Angle 2: Gender Identity, Binaries, and Nonconforming Identities
 - Angle 3: Sexual Orientation
- **Gender Equality** is the second major topic of the guide and has questions divided into three themes. This is an incredibly important topic, and we want to take this

opportunity to echo what is written at the top of this section: *“Gender equality and rights are inseparably linked with other forms of equality. Gender rights vary along racial, economic, and cultural lines, and facilitators should encourage reflection on these intersections as they arise in session – or bring these intersections into the session with questions like: ‘Does this apply/resonate with everyone in the room?’ or ‘Are there some people/groups these ideas may not apply to in the same way?’”*

- Theme 1: Society
- Theme 2: Relationships
- Theme 3: Rights
- **Gender, Work, and Student Life** is topic three, and it explores gender norms in relation to the job market and interactions on campus.
- **Marriage Rights** is topic four, and is a helpful resource if you think your group has different opinions on this topic. If you find that the group seems outside of this “debate” (for example: the whole group supports the idea of marriage for same-sex partners) you should move on and skip this section.
- The final section of the guide is titled **Troubleshooting Dynamics: Pronouns are not Respected in the Room**, and this is a very helpful resource if you find that participants are struggling with proper pronoun usage for trans or non-binary participants. We’ll talk more in the workshop today about handling this particular dynamic. This part of the guide is more for pervasive, consistent, or active misgendering than small mistakes.
- **Definitions Document: LGBTQI2SA+**
 - **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Two-Spirit, Asexual/Agender, and more (pansexual)**

Q: Are there any questions so far about gender dynamics in 1YC or about the new guide?

A little later in the workshop we’ll go through some scenarios from past 1YC groups, and we’ll practice navigating them together. Before we do that though, we want to talk more about inclusivity.

Inclusivity [25 mins]

Q: Let’s start by thinking back to a time where you witnessed exclusionary and/or derogatory language being used – What was the intent of the person using this language, and what was the impact of this language?

- **Intent vs. impact:** Which examples can you think of in your own lives when someone acted with good intent, but the impact of their words was hurtful?
- Intent and impact don’t always align. While our intent matters, we are also responsible for the impact of our words and actions. This is true for both participants and facilitators.

Q: What happens if a facilitator uses language that is perceived by participants to be exclusionary?

Points to mention:

- When a facilitator does or says something that is perceived to be exclusionary, it **compromises their multipartiality**.
- Participants may believe facilitators have positive or negative opinions that affect how they frame interventions or who they are likely to support. Participants who believe the facilitator is not on “their side” may pull back from the discussion.

Keeping the language we use as facilitators *as inclusive as possible* is an important part of our ability to remain neutral and multipartial. This isn't unique to 1YC, and it's something many of us work on in our facilitation.

*Potsdam Pledge in case we need it.

<https://www.potsdam.edu/about/mission>

Q: What are examples of words or slang you have used in the past that can be unintentionally exclusionary in relation to gender?

Trainer/Lead/Staff: For all of the examples facilitators share highlight these four things:

1. What is the word/slang at issue
2. An example of it being used
3. What effect does it have (intent vs. impact)
4. How that example could be fixed or altered to avoid exclusionary language

Cover at Least These:

- “You guys”
 - **Example:** “Hey guys”
 - **Example:** “How are you guys doing this morning/evening”
 - **Fixed with:** “Hey everyone/Hello all” or “Hey folks”, “How are you folks doing this morning” “Hey friends” “Hi group name (and come up with a unique one!)”
- Using “he” or “him” when describing a hypothetical person (particularly in traditionally “masculine roles”)
 - **Example:** “Pretend you are at the doctor’s office, and he tells you...xyz”
 - **Fixed with:** Singular “they”
- Using “she” or “her” when describing a hypothetical person (particularly in traditionally “feminine roles”)
 - **Example:** “If a teacher were to ask you xyz, how would you respond to her?”

- **Fixed with:** Singular “them”

***If time: “Ladies and gentlemen”**

[More information on this example: <https://public.oed.com/blog/a-brief-history-of-singular-they/>.]

While we’re on the topic of inclusivity, we want to recognize that the groups we have seen in 1YC are very diverse, **particularly at SUNY Potsdam**. For this reason, breakout rooms should not be used to divide people based on presumed gender identities or sexuality.

Q: What are some challenges that might result from breaking up 1YC participants based on perceived gender identity or sexuality?

Points to mention:

- Gender identity and sexuality are not obvious, it’s not always actively expressed, or participants could currently be exploring them.
 - **To Note:** Of all the questions asked in registration, the question about sexual orientation is the one most often left blank (almost 30%). Indicating they are not comfortable sharing, or they are exploring these identities.
- **If you have a non-binary participant(s):** You are mis-gendering them by placing them in the same room as others with a gender identity with which they do not identify.
- **If you have LGBTQI2SA+ participant(s):** The experiences of LGBTQI2SA+ participants vary wildly, oftentimes the only thing they have in common is *not* being cis or straight. Not only does it reduce their identity to being “excluded from the same thing,” but it prevents your cis and straight participants from having the opportunity to engage with people they may have much in common with.

We will come back to inclusivity with respect to non-binary participants later in the workshop. For now, let’s shift gears and work through some practice scenarios related to gender and inclusivity in 1YC.

Gender & Inclusivity Practice Scenarios [20 mins]

Share the following scenarios with facilitators and elicit responses as to how they would address these issues in group sessions. Consider doing actual role plays, in case facts struggle to be “in situation”.

Practice Scenario 1: During a discussion on gender, only the participants who had previously identified themselves as female are contributing to the discussion.

Possible Solutions:

- **Reflect on the dynamic in the room:** Use meta-discussion to bring the dynamic of the discussion to the awareness of the room. Ask the participants why they think this may be happening in their discussion.
- **Ask inclusive questions:** Ensure facilitator questions are inclusive and allow space for every participant to add their ideas and experiences on the gender dynamics being discussed in the room.

Practice Scenario 2: During discussions on gender, you notice that when your LGBTQI2SA+ participants include discussion related to identity or sexuality your participants who had previously identified themselves as cis and straight disconnect from the discussion and go silent.

Alternative:

- "During a discussion on gender, one of your participants refers to trans people as "those people," and several of your participants visibly disengage."
- "Your group has established a good dynamic, and contributions during discussions are pretty evenly distributed. However, during a discussion on gender, you notice that several participants who usually contribute are silent."

Possible Solutions:

- **Reflect on the dynamic in the room:** Use meta-discussion to bring the dynamic of the discussion to the awareness of the room. Ask the participants why they think this may be happening in their discussion.
- **Invite curiosity:** Mention that the group has brought very diverse experiences to the room – are there any questions your LGBTQ+ participants have for the straight/cis participants or vice versa?

Practice Scenario 3: When discussing experiences of gender, your group sticks to "politically correct" statements so as not to offend anyone.

Possible Solutions:

- **Connect to the personal:** Ask questions to get to the core of what significance the topic has for each individual. For example, how does it connect to their daily lives and experiences, and what emotions does it evoke?
- **Use tools to draw out differences of opinion anonymously:** by doing a poll or utilizing the whiteboard to allow participants to share potentially controversial statements anonymously.

~~If there is extra time, ask the group for scenarios they have faced/or are nervous about facing that they would like to practice.~~

[5 min break]

Pronouns [20 mins]

In 1YC we have seen, and expect to see, participants who are open about being non-binary or transgender **in the United States**. Trans and non-binary (“enby”) identities aren’t new — they’ve been around as long as humans have. The important part here is that *how we navigate and affirmatively support differences as a society* is changing, which affects the way we include different gender identities. One important part of facilitating in 1YC is to allow an open discussion about gender inclusivity from day 1. This can start with pronouns. In past 1YC groups, we’ve seen a number of LGBTQI2SA+ participants using a variety of pronouns to describe their gender identity.

Q: Why is it important that facilitators recognize and promote proper pronoun usage in the group?

Points to mention:

- Not all non-binary and non-conforming sexual and gender identities are always expressed, some may be actively exploring them, and others may be closeted.
- Participants may feel alienated, excluded, or generally unwelcome in the room if the group does not use the proper gender pronouns for them.
 - **The cultural context of these issues in the United States is important to keep in mind because it is highly likely that you will have participants who are part of this community, regardless of whether or not they express the identity.**
- **It is a trigger for a phenomena we are very familiar with – Identity Threat!**

Q: What is the reaction when a part of someone’s identity is invalidated/taken away?

If facilitators are struggling:

“When we feel that a part of our identity is threatened, it tends to make us (human beings) feel defensive and insecure. It also tends to make us cling more tightly to that aspect of our identity – and to feel that that part is extremely important.”

Gender identity is a strong identity marker for many participants in virtual exchange, and it can be especially strong for trans and non-binary participants who struggle to gain societal, familial, or community acceptance. In effect, non-binary and non-conforming participants can experience identity threat related to gender on a daily basis. When

participants in the room struggle with the usage of a person's proper pronouns, it is a reflection of the level of society's overall social acceptance and integration of trans and gender non-binary community members.

Important consideration: At the same time, we need to acknowledge that being "gender inclusive" can be perceived as a controversial piece of the facilitation because not everyone necessarily supports people being able to choose their gender pronouns. With the following, we are trying to find a balance between fostering an inclusive space for all genders and sexual minorities and... **fostering an inclusive space for those who do not support the first way of being inclusive!** [Hand over to Rafael/Alex]

So here is what we recommend you do on the first session:

- Ask everyone to say their name as they would like to be called (which may be different from their screen name), and invite them to correct you if you have mispronounced anyone's name. Please also invite participants to share their pronouns if they would like to. If you are comfortable doing so, indicate your gender pronouns as well to model it for the group. For instance, "Hi, I am Cailey, and my pronouns are she/her."
- If a participant identifies as trans or non-binary, and indicates a particular gender pronoun (e.g. she, her, he, him, ze, zir, they, theirs, etc.), you should honor that pronoun.
- In case this raises questions from participants who do not seem familiar with that, you can invite the room to explain where those pronouns come from. If you see that participants are not ready or comfortable, or if the topic is not covered correctly, you can explain that **"pronouns can differ from a person's sex they were assigned at birth and/or how they are perceived by society. Trans or gender non-binary people may end up being called pronouns with which they don't identify. The facilitators want the space to be welcoming for everyone's identity to reflect the diversity of the campus. Therefore, everyone is welcome to share their pronouns."**
 - Let them know also that if they are interested, this can be further talked about in a later session [you'll then be using the "Gender and Sexual Orientation" discussion guide, which includes more tips on such a discussion]. But the discussion does not need to be expansive if you are only on the first session. You can also share the following references:
 - <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>.
 - https://www.glaad.org/reference/lgbtq?response_type=embed.

- If a participant openly identifies as trans or non-binary, but does not indicate a pronoun preference, you can ask them which gender pronouns are appropriate in a private message. If they say they do not use pronouns at all, just support that in your facilitation and try to remember that preference by simply referring to them by their name. For instance, instead of saying “So we’ve heard from Sophie that she thinks...”, you can say “So we’ve heard from Sophie that Sophie thinks...”

Q: What should you do if your group has a participant who identifies as non-binary/transgender AND you misgender that participant? *Elicit some of the facilitators’ thoughts/opinions on this before sharing the points below.*

- Apologize briefly and correct yourself.
- Do not call attention to it or over apologize in order to not put them even more on the spot. Remember this might be as new to you as it is for some of your group’s participants.
- If the individual who was misgendered wants to have a conversation with you about this, you should be willing and open to engaging in that conversation.
- Please don’t avoid using someone’s pronouns entirely out of fear that you might accidentally use the incorrect pronoun. That could be perceived as a microaggression, and the cumulative harmful impact could build over time, despite your good intent.

Q: What should you do as the group’s facilitator when you notice a participant’s pronouns are not being used correctly and they are misgendered? *Elicit some of the facilitators’ thoughts/opinions on this before sharing the points below.*

- **Check if the participant is upset, or would appreciate your intervention.** It’s possible the person won’t mind or would rather correct it themselves. A simple PM to the misgendered participant checking in can go a long way in ensuring they remain comfortable in the room.
- **Correct it:** If you feel authorized by the participant to do that (that is also something you can check with them via PM), take the mic and correct the misgendering: “Thanks for your reply to participant X; a quick reminder that their pronouns are they/them (she/her, he/him, etc.) as X mentioned earlier.”
- **Follow with a reframe:** After correcting the misgendering, following with a summary or a reframing of the conversation so far helps to push the conversation along and ensures that participants don’t get bogged down by the mistake — essentially it helps to pull focus back to the topic in the room.

Q: What should you do if you notice your co-facilitator is the one not using a participant's correct pronoun(s)?

- **Check-in on Skype:** with your co-facilitator and let them know that they slipped-up on the pronouns that participant X uses. We all make mistakes!
- **Correct it:** If the conversation has moved forward and it's too late for your co-fac to take the mic, correct the misgendering in the chat: "I used the wrong pronouns for participant X a moment ago, my apologies!"

In addition to what we have just covered you can also:

- Check in with your co-facilitator and let them know you are there to support them if needed or if it happens again.
- If it is something that keeps recurring (in session, communication to participant(s) and/or in the session notes), reach out to your coach for additional support and guidance.

Pronoun Practice Scenarios [10 mins]

Share the following scenarios with facilitators and elicit responses as to how they would address these issues in group sessions.

[Practice Scenario 1: A participant corrects the group for misgendering them.](#)

Possible Solutions:

- **Acknowledge and normalize:** Thank the participant for the correction and remind the group to correct misused pronouns in the chat or on the mic at any time!
- ~~Run another pronoun circle:~~ Depending on when in the session this happens, running another pronoun circle (use the same instructions as above, keeping this only optional) would serve as a reminder for the group to be cognizant of proper pronouns (as long as it doesn't derail the discussion). If the timing doesn't fit, start the next session (and as many of the following sessions as you want) with pronoun circles – it serves as a reminder *and* helps to normalize introductions with pronouns for the participants: a win-win!

[Practice Scenario 2: A participant repeatedly misgenders another participant despite pronouns being made clear.](#)

Possible Solutions:

- **Take a moment to reflect on the identity activity:** Remind the group of their experience in the identity activity and ask about identity threat: *"If someone disregards one of the aspects of your identity, how does it feel? What does it tell a person if you do or don't recognize an aspect of their identity that is important to them?"*

- **Contextualize trans and non-binary acceptance in society – then move to meta discussion:** ask the participants about acceptance of trans and enby language in society: *“If a whole community or society doesn’t use language that acknowledges a person’s identity, how does it affect their ability to interact with that society? What dynamics might that create?”* Once the group has discussed this, open up to meta-discussion: *“How accepting have we been in the room? Have we created a space that allows all of us to interact and participate equally?”* *Have we lived up to the SUNY Potsdam Pledge?*
- **Reach out to Soliya Support:** Coaches/staff, etc.

Note: *If facilitators are nervous with this scenario, share that the gender discussion guide has a session for addressing this particular scenario.*

Closing Round [10 mins]

Q: Ask the group what their main takeaways were and how they are feeling about some of the things they learned in today’s workshop?

Q: Any questions they have?