



SOCIAL CHANGE PROJECT

SOWK360, Race and
Gender

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QUEERNESS IN EMU CLASSROOMS

What is this? A brief and comprehensive introduction to queer identities and how to make your lives and classrooms more LGBTQIA+ friendly!



Why? Knowing what to do and how to be more inclusive to undersupported groups can be challenging, and we wanted to make that a little bit easier when it comes to queer issues!

We hope this is a helpful resource!





BASIC DEFINITIONS



Cisgendered: Your gender identity aligns with what society expects from your assigned sex

Heterosexual/Straight: You are attracted to who society expects you to be, i.e. the "opposite" gender.

Misgender: To use someone's wrong pronouns/ refer to them as the wrong gender

Outing: To share someone's identity without their consent, forcing them "out of the closet"

Questioning: Being unsure/ exploring ones gender or sexual identity. This can be terrifying, anxiety inducing, stressful, etc. Everyone's journey is different in how long it takes, when it happens, what started it, how they dealt with it etc. This is absolutely included in the queer community!





MORE DEFINITIONS



Queer- A blanket term for all non-cis, non-het identities

Gay/Lesbian- attraction to your same gender

Bi/pansexual- attracted to multiple or all genders



Transgender- gender does not align with sex assigned at birth, I.e. transgender man (assigned female at birth, aka AFAB, but identifies as a man), transgender woman (assigned male at birth, aka AMAB, identifies as a woman), can also be an umbrella term for all non-cisgender identities



Non binary/ genderqueer etc- a gender identity that falls outside of the expected gender binary



Deadname- the name someone was given at birth, but they no longer use since it doesn't align with their gender identity



This is by no means an complete list! Definitions can vary from person to person





DO'S AND DON'TS



How should I refer to the LGBTQIA+ community? Queer community is fine! So is variations of LGBTQ+, but that's a lot of letters

What do I do if I accidentally deadname/misgender somebody? Apologize, correct your mistake, and move on relatively quickly. It's OK to send a check in email later if you feel it's appropriate. We're human, accidents happen!

Someone does something homophobic- politely correct them, privately check in with victim parties if it feels appropriate.

Things to avoid: "the gays/queers/homosexuals", talking about it as an "other" group- it's really alienating!, deadnaming/misgendering, outing people, "oh I have a gay friend/relative etc!"

I found out someone is queer- now what? Affirm/validate them! Avoid the phrase "no matter what"- it implies it's wrong. If they have a new name/pronouns, use them! No need to make a big deal about it, simply start using it. Do make sure to check in about how out they are- especially when it comes to anything that will be widely visible. The wrong people finding out can create an unsafe situation.

WHAT CAN I DO AS A PROFESSOR?



If you're able to, find out what names and pronouns people want you to use before the first day of class- this can ease anxiety around first day attendance taking!

Give space to share pronouns!

Keep in mind that some (especially if they're questioning) may not feel comfortable sharing theirs, and that's ok! Giving space and starting that conversation makes queer students feel seen!

Be aware of heteronormative language! Be intentional about recognizing heteronormative language and trying to represent other identities in a way that is casual and normalizes them.

Be an example! Respect pronouns, use inclusive and sensitive language, etc.



Never assume anyone's gender and/or sexual and/or romantic identity! Some people are very openly proud, others aren't. Some people will correct you on their identities, other won't. **Queerness is not limited to a certain "look", stereotype, race, nationality, major, socioeconomic status, etc.**

WHAT QUEER EMU STUDENTS WISH THEIR PROFESSORS KNEW



"people are still figuring stuff out so sometimes it can be hard to have enough time to get work done and balance trying to work on mental health."



"Sometimes when teachers make an over the top heavy emphasis on the fact that they included a queer writer or artist into the class work or topics it feels like they are more so using it as a display to get brownie points and not a 'background info fact'. When teachers overdo it or over say it, it can get a little uncomfy in the class."

**TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM
A GOOGLE FORM MADE
AVAILABLE TO AS
MANY STUDENTS AS
POSSIBLE**

"That many of their lessons are extremely heteronormative."

"It is incredibly affirming to feel supported and seen by professors who acknowledge queerness. The first time one of my professors acknowledged that the gender binary is a construct was life changing for me. It is so validating to feel like we are not an afterthought, so please include queer history and queer lives in education. It makes us so happy."

"sometimes its hard to talk about even if I trust them"

MORE THINGS WE WANT PROFESSORS TO KNOW



"I wish that my non-queer professors knew that it's helpful to see/hear open support of the community from them in classes as well as outside of them."

"That some of us who are 'straight-passing' or 'don't look queer' are actually queer."



"Class discussions are different for queer students than their straight classmates"

"I'm scared to use restrooms outside of my dorm building and talking in classes makes my anxiety and dysphoria spike"



"Not everyone knows they're queer when in college or high school. Sometimes you figure out later in life so when there are older students who are trying to figure out their identity that they should receive full support of their identity"

"Some things, especially with voice, can cause a lot of dysphoria"

A MORE QUEER FRIENDLY CLASSROOM: FROM STUDENTS

"Talk about gender and sexuality! There are intersections everywhere, so even if you think it might not be relevant to whatever subject you teach, do some research. Who are queer people who have contributed to that subject/field that might be overlooked? Even little things like including a queer couple in a math problem can be affirming. It doesn't feel good to sit in class wondering whether or not your professor supports your existence, so this helps us to feel seen."

"Don't say things like 'your future husband'"

"Ask everyone's pronouns on the first day of class"

"remind us that its okay to be queer and stuff"

"Not to assume straight till proven gay with the students, especially in a class discussion setting."

"More gender neutral language!"

"Be aware of their own implicit biases. Certain phrasing and things that are said can be offensive."





MORE INPUT FROM STUDENTS

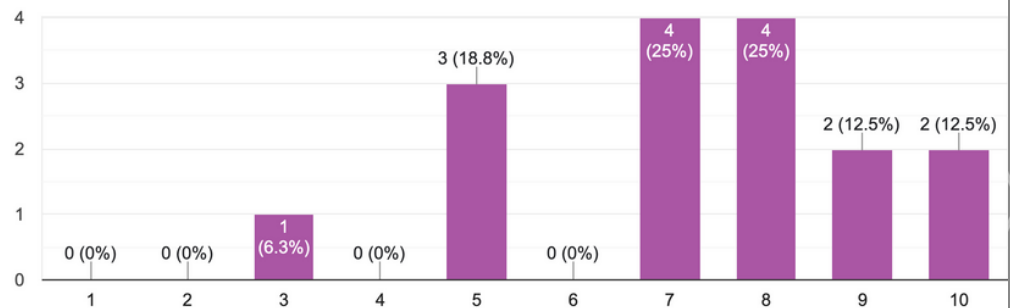


"My one prof has a pride sticker on her ID card. I would love it if my other profs, who are supportive of the LGBTQ+ community, could do the same. It lets me know I'm safe to come out. I don't feel the need to come out, most of the time. I don't want to make a big deal of it, but I am very cautious when I say certain things or make jokes."

"It would be nice if they could open ways to communicate about queerness and what queer people have done outside of our history, as well as talking about our history and how it's shaped things."

As a queer person, I feel that my professors affirm, respect, accept, and give space in the classroom for my identity

16 responses



"I think more acknowledgment of the queer communities. It's like taboo to talk about it sometimes but it's very normal to have students who are in the queer community"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Locally: Friendly
City Safe Space

The Trevor Project

Resources for
Allies

Resources for
Educators

The Gender Unicorn

Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ Students



Please take a couple of minutes to
fill out this google form for
feedback and to make yourself
known as a safe person with this
groovy office decor!

