

Understanding the Needs of LGBTQ+ Youth

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Today's Agenda

Time	Topic
9:00 – 10:00am	Understanding the LGBTQ+ Community
10:00 – 10:15am	Break
10:15 – 11:00am	Risk Factors The Overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ Youth in the Juvenile Justice System LGBTQ+ Youth & Sexual Offenses
11:00 – 11:15am	Break
11:15 – 11:45am	Protective Factors How to be an Ally Inclusive Policies & Practices
11:45am – 12:00pm	Moderated Q&A



Things To Keep In Mind Today

- Be open to learning something new
- Confidentiality means we let lessons leave, but stories should stay
- Ask questions and engage in the discussion whether today or in follow-up with me after
- Recognize that my role is to share information about LGBTQ+ people, not to change your personal or religious beliefs
- Content Warning: sexual violence, suicide, self-harm, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny



Understanding the LGBTQ+ Community

Disclaimer: Identity is personal and the definitions and framework offered here are a starting place for understanding, but certainly not the only understanding of LGBTQ+ identities.



The Acronym – LGBTQ+

L	Lesbian
G	Gay
B	Bisexual
T	Transgender
Q	Queer

USE CAUTION: The Term Queer

The term queer is a complicated one.

For many they will only think of it as a derogatory slur, but many embrace the term because of the fluidity and ambiguity it holds.

Queer basically means, different from what is expected in relation to gender and sexuality.



(+) Beyond the Acronym

Sexual Orientation

- Asexual
- Aromantic
- Bisexual
- Demisexual
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer

Gender Identity

- Agender
- Bigender
- Demiboy
- Demigirl
- Non-Binary
- Gender Queer
- Pangender
- Transgender
- Neutrois
- Queer

Gender Expression

- Gender Fluid
- Gender Flux
- Gender Expansive
- Drag Queen
- Drag King
- Gender Non – Conforming
- Queer



Identity as a Spectrum

Sex Assigned at Birth



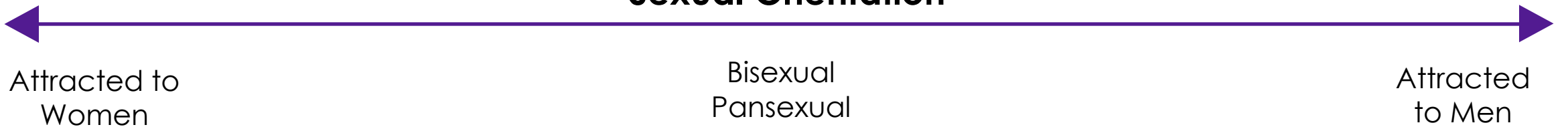
Gender Identity



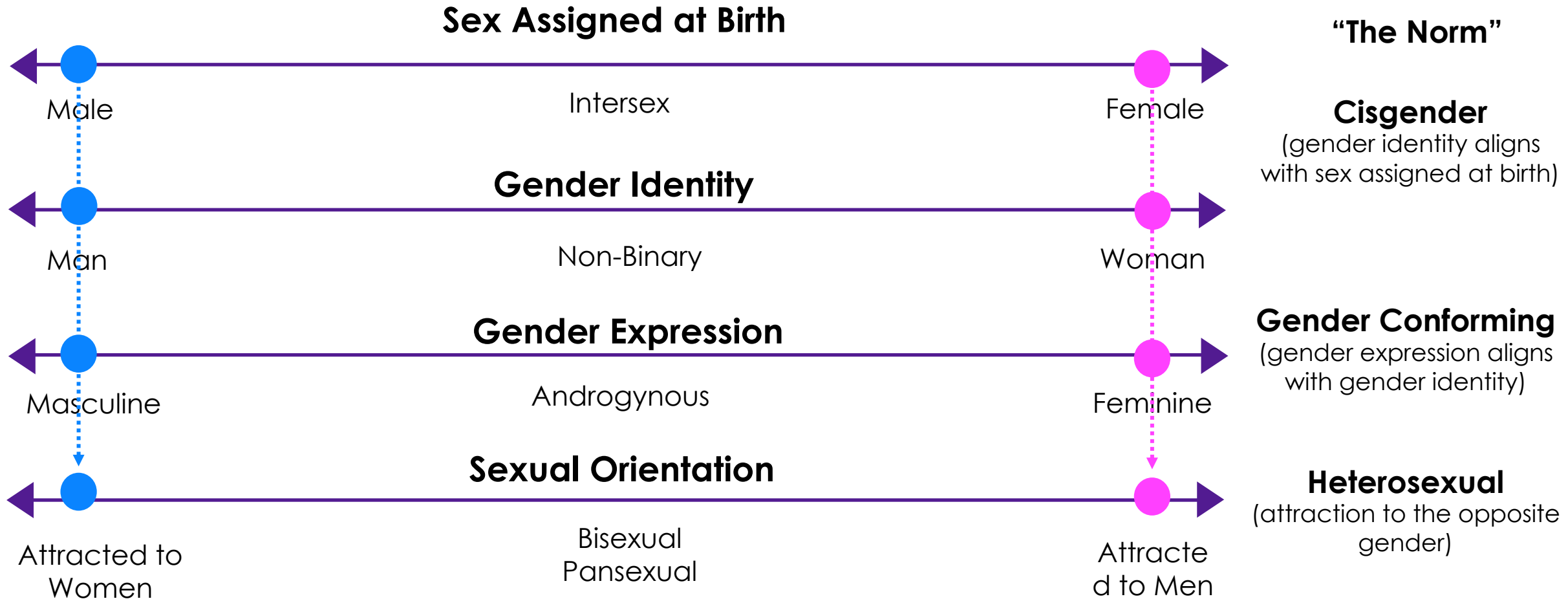
Gender Expression



Sexual Orientation



The Gender Binary



Identity as a Spectrum



Sex Assigned at Birth refers to the medical practice of assigning sex (typically male or female) based solely on external genitalia (penis or vagina).

Intersex

A person whose body does not meet medical standards for male or female.

(**Term to Avoid: Hermaphrodite**)



Identity as a Spectrum

Sex Assigned at Birth



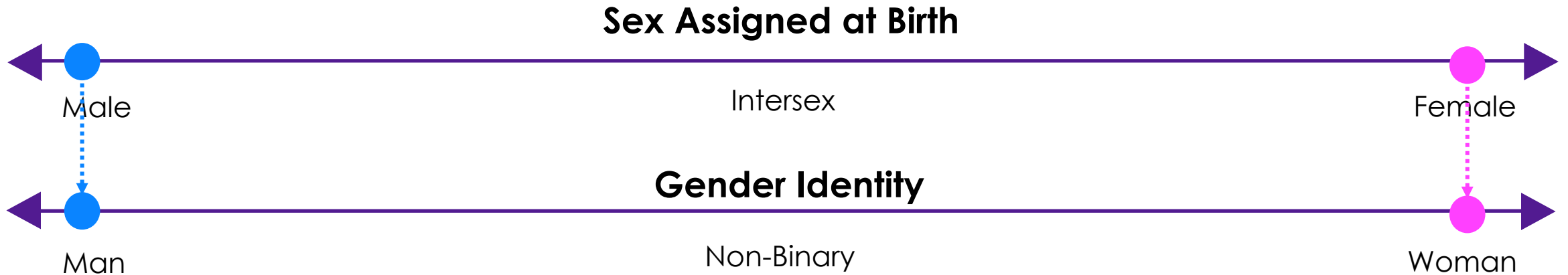
Gender Identity



Gender Identity is your internal compass or your personal understanding of who you are in relation to gender.



Identity as a Spectrum



Cisgender

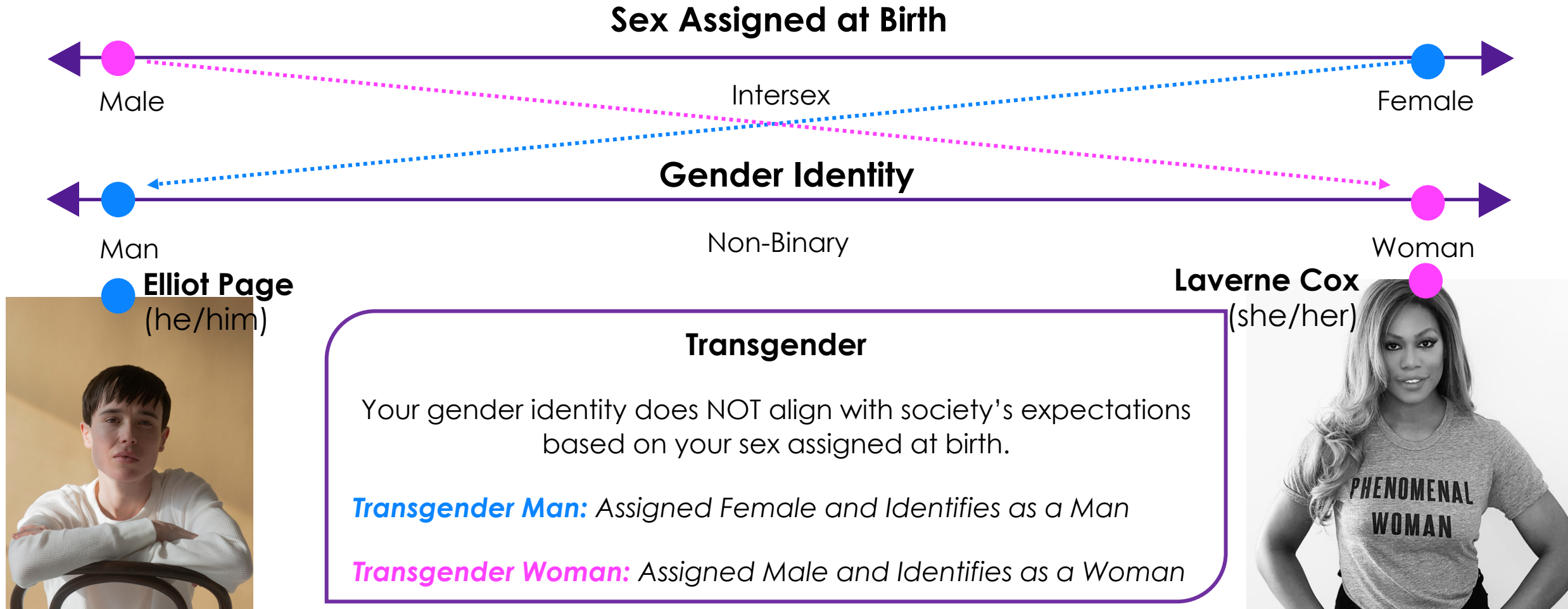
Your gender identity aligns with society's expectations based on your sex assigned at birth.

Cisgender Man: Assigned Male and Identifies as a Man

Cisgender Woman: Assigned Female and Identifies as a Woman



Identity as a Spectrum



Identity as a Spectrum

Sex Assigned at Birth



Gender Identity



Mauree Turner
(they/them)

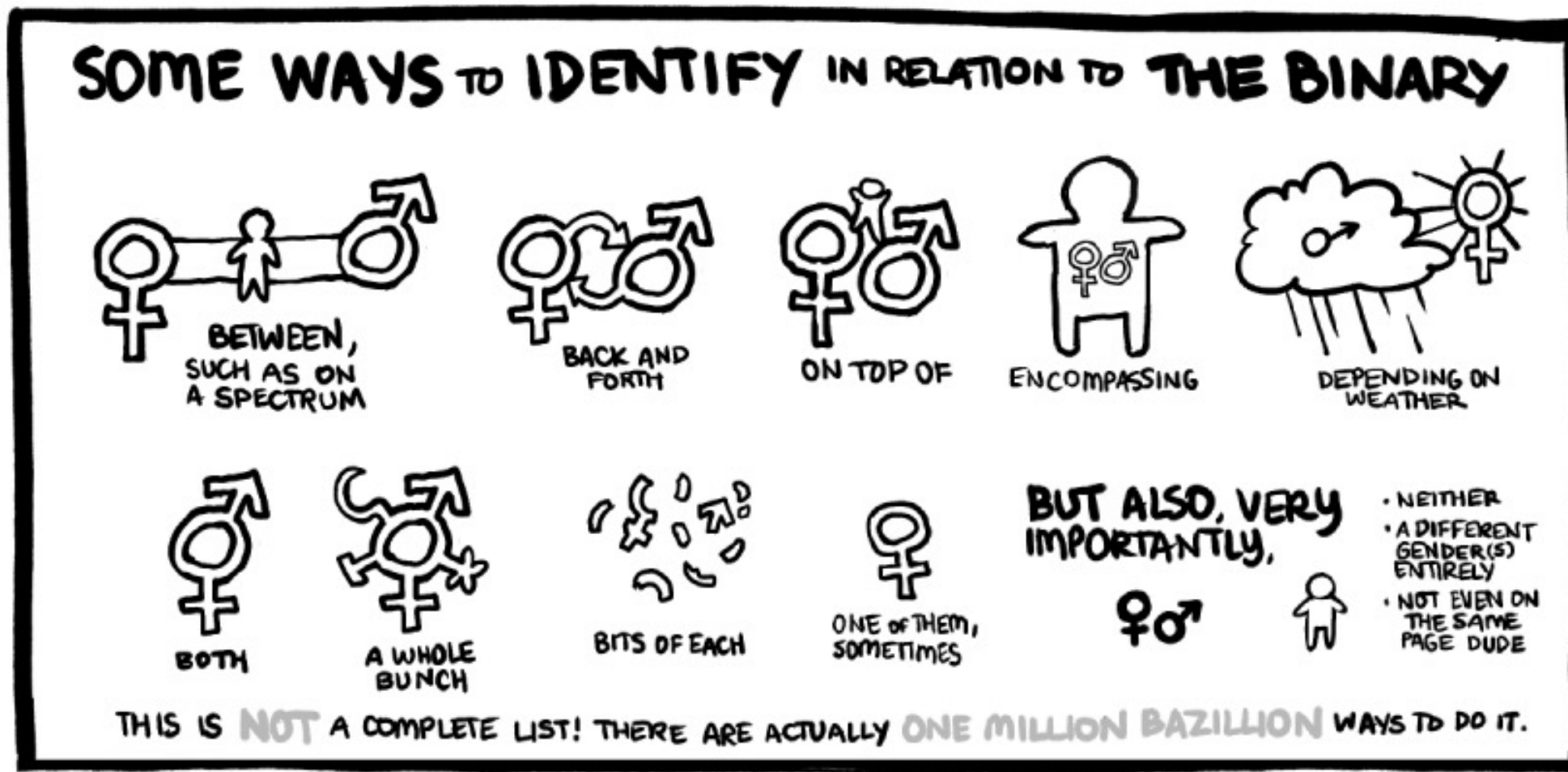
Non-Binary

An umbrella term for people who do not identify as men or women. There are many different terms that people use to define their gender.

Sam Smith
(they/them)



Non-Binary Identities



Understanding Transgender Identities

- **When do People Know?** - Children understand their own gender identity as young as 3 or 4 and by the age of 6, most children's gender identity is constant and independent of external features.
- **Why are People Transgender?** - There are many theories for why people are transgender and there is a growing body of research pointing to a biological basis for being transgender.
- **What about Socialization?** - People are socialized as the gender that aligns with society's expectations based on their sex assigned at birth. Hence, many transgender people struggle with their identity at all phases of their life.



Social & Medical Transition

SOCIAL

- Recognizing you are a gender different from your sex assigned at birth
- Publicly sharing your gender identity with others
- Possibly changing your gender expression to better match your identity
- Using a new name or using different pronouns

MEDICAL

- Hormone Blockers to delay the impact of puberty
- Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
- Surgery on your chest / breasts
- Surgery on internal and/or external reproductive organs

CAUTION: Medical transition is a conversation between a trans person and their medical provider only.



Identity as a Spectrum

Sex Assigned at Birth



Gender Identity



Gender Expression



Gender Expression

How you express yourself (including clothing, hair styles, the roles you take on, the jobs you have, etc.) that are tied to cultural norms around gender expectations, typically associated with masculinity and femininity.



Gender Identity vs. Gender Expression

TRANSBOY (identity)

- Assigned female at birth
- **Identify as a boy**
- Could express himself in any number of ways (masculine, feminine, androgynous, etc.)

TOMBOY (expression)

- Assigned female at birth
- Identify as a girl
- **Expresses herself in masculine ways**

CAUTION: Gender identity is not the same as gender expression. Much like cisgender people, not all transgender people express their gender in ways we may expect.



Express Jeans – A Story of Gender Expression Expectations



Slim Fit Jeans
(for men)



People who have a gender expression outside the norm are more likely to be targeted for harassment and violence.

Feminine men and transgender women are even more likely to be targeted because of the dangerous combination of transphobia and misogyny.



Are You “Man Enough”

*Sometimes Boys
Wear Dresses*

“I have a client who is a transboy, but last week he wore a dress to our counseling session, so then he can’t really be a boy right?”



Young Thug



Harry Styles



Identity as a Spectrum

Sex Assigned at Birth



Gender Identity



Gender Expression



Sexual Orientation



Sexual Orientation

Desire & Attraction

Innate part of who you are
as a person

Heterosexual, bisexual, gay,
lesbian, pansexual, etc.



Sexual Behavior

Gratification & Needs

Sometimes based in
circumstances

“Gay for the Stay”
Survival Sex Work



Sexual Violence

Power & Control

Controlling, harming, or
hurting someone

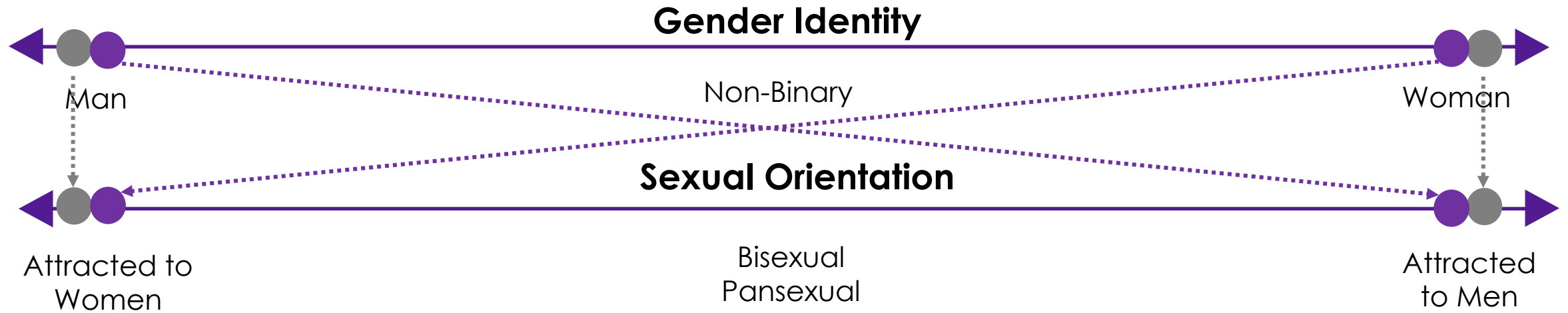
Assault, rape, etc.

Can you be gay and a virgin?

LGBTQ youth are more likely to be victims of sexual violence, but they are NOT LGBTQ because of this violence.



Identity as a Spectrum



Heterosexual

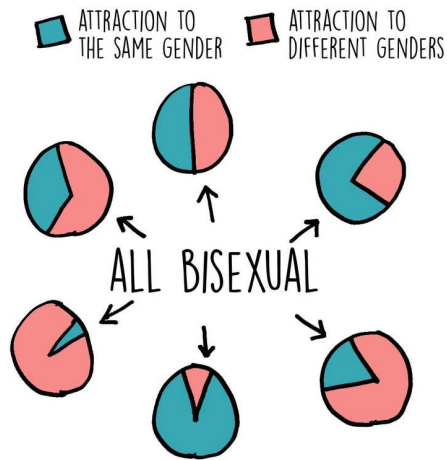
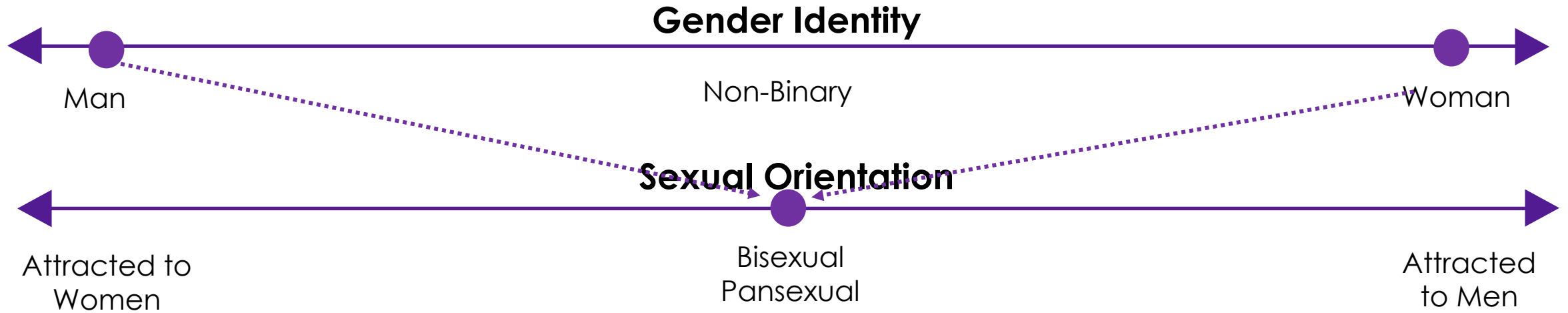
Attracted to the
Opposite
Gender

Gay / Lesbian

Attracted to the
Same Gender



Identity as a Spectrum



Bisexual

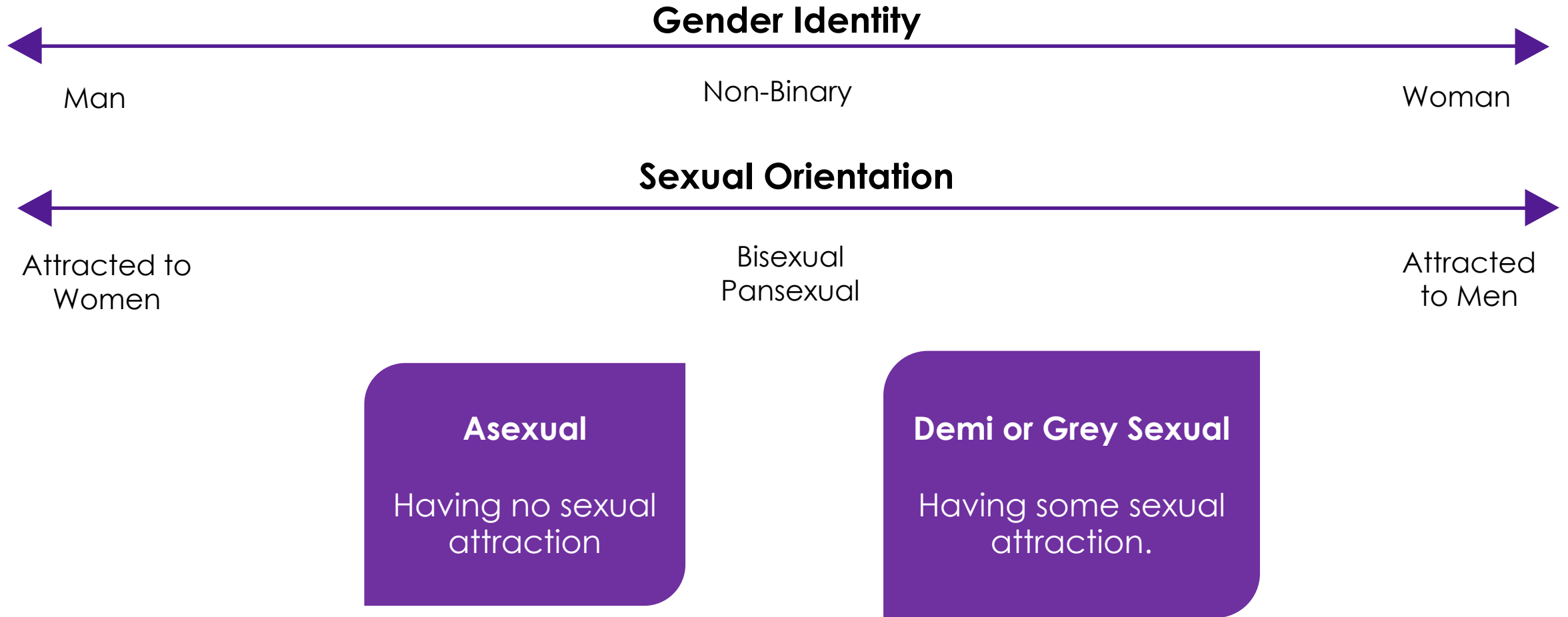
Attracted to one or more genders

Pansexual

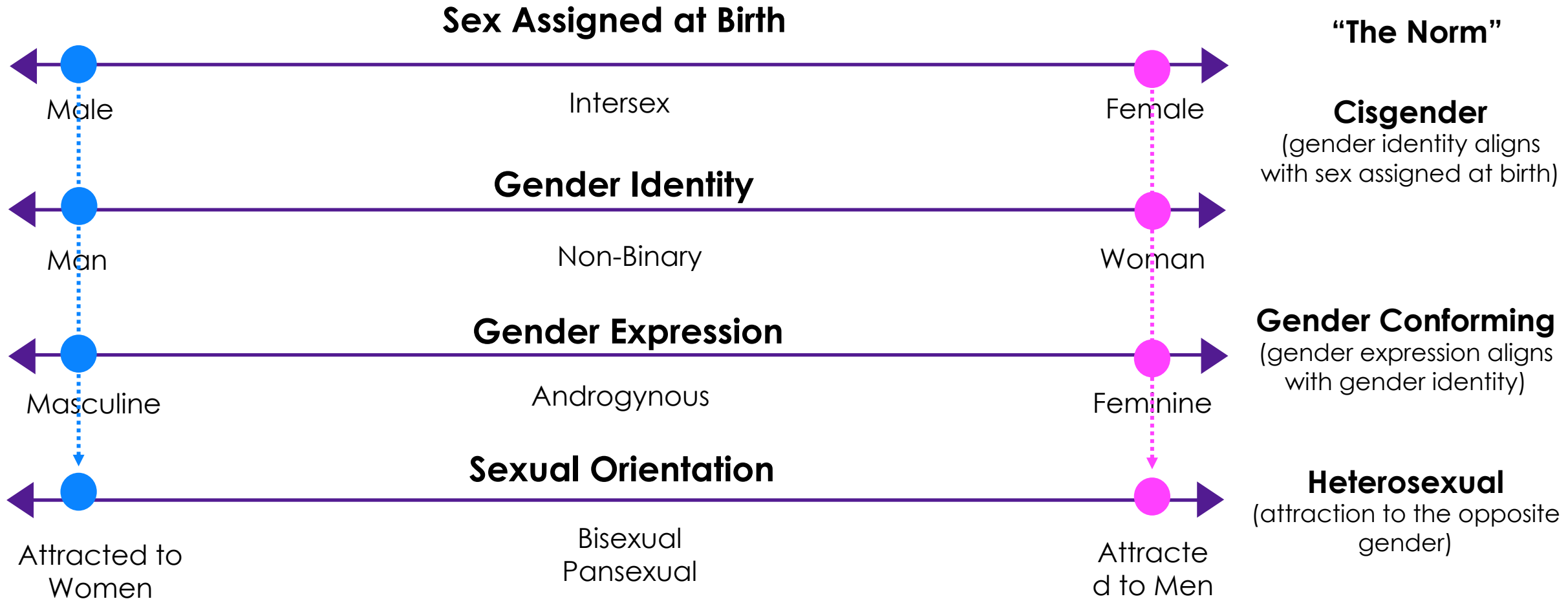
Attracted to the person regardless of gender



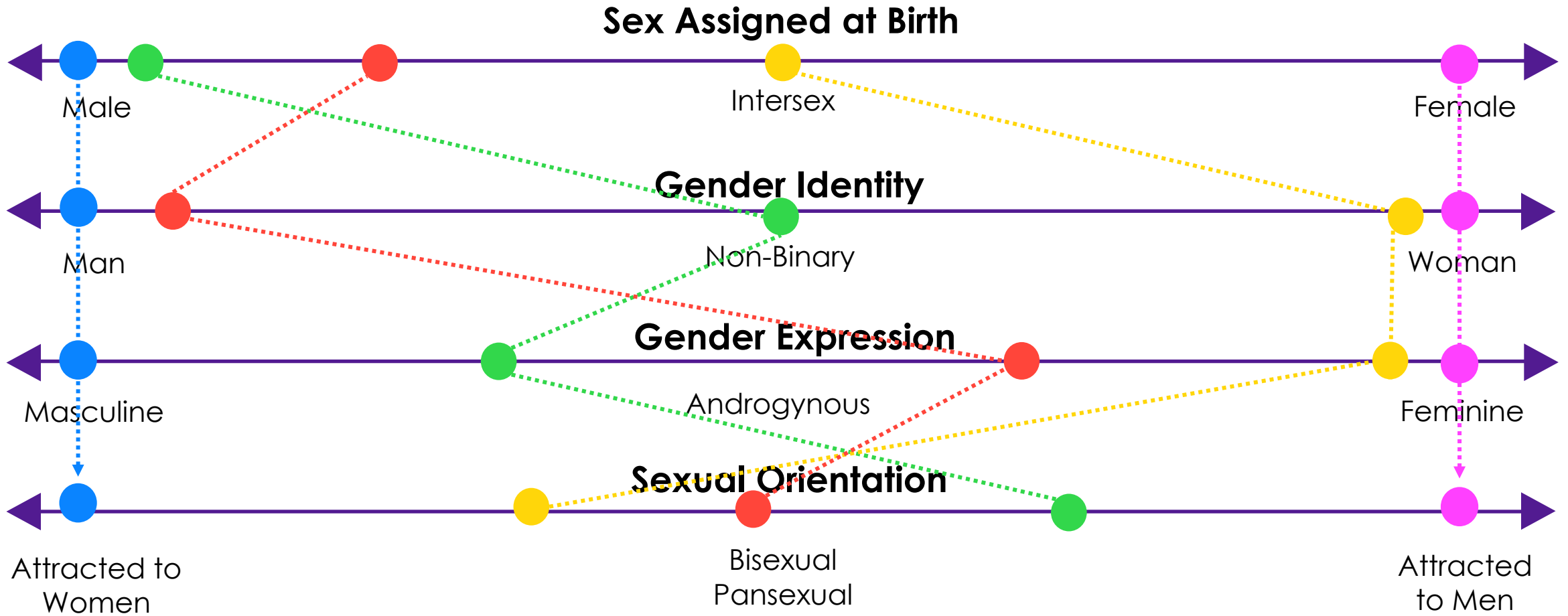
Identity as a Spectrum



The Gender Binary



Identity as a Spectrum



Identity as a Spectrum

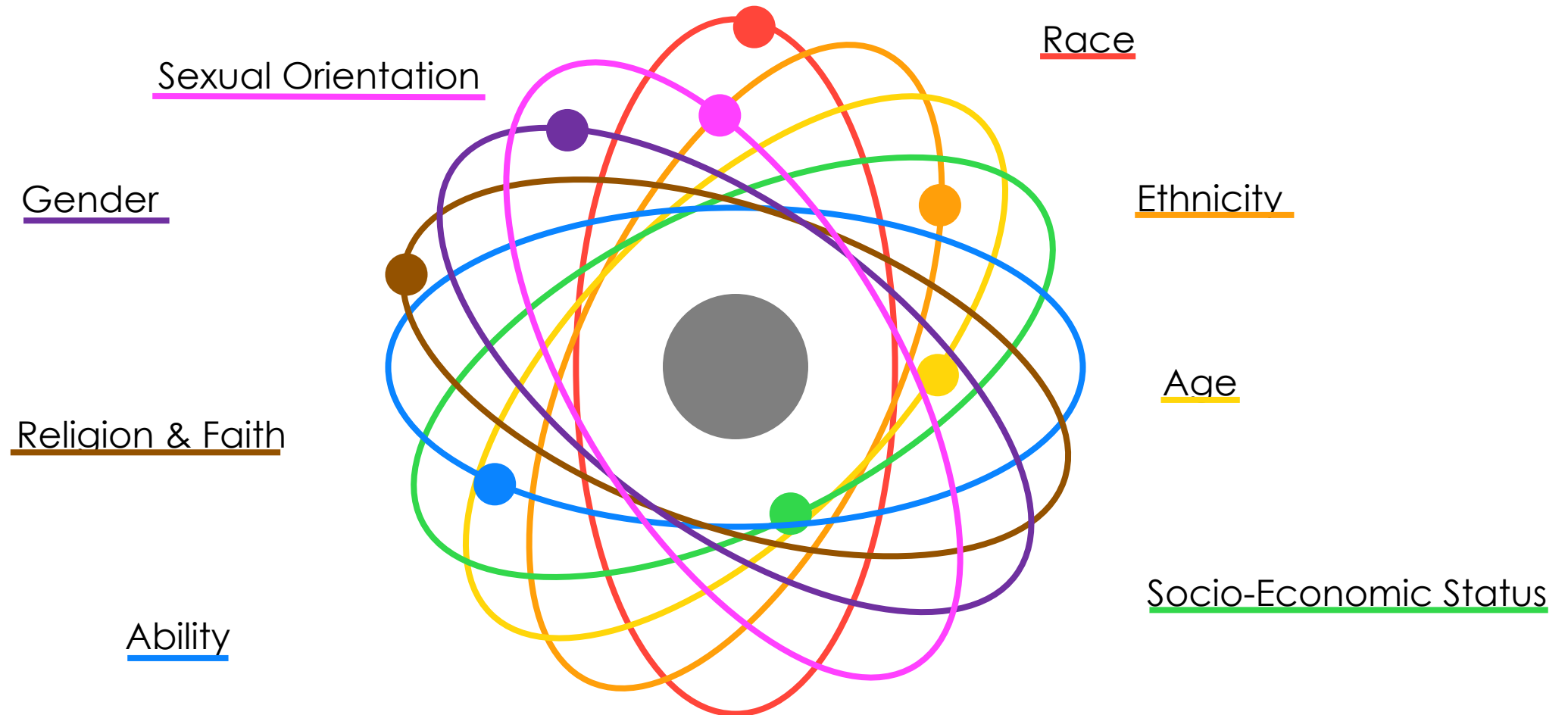
The
Gender
Binary

Male
Male
Masculine
Attracted
Women

Female
Woman
Feminine
Attracted
Men



Identity is Complex & Intersecting



Break Time

Please return at 10:15am



Risk Factors for LGBTQ+ Youth

Content Warning: suicide, sexual violence, family rejection

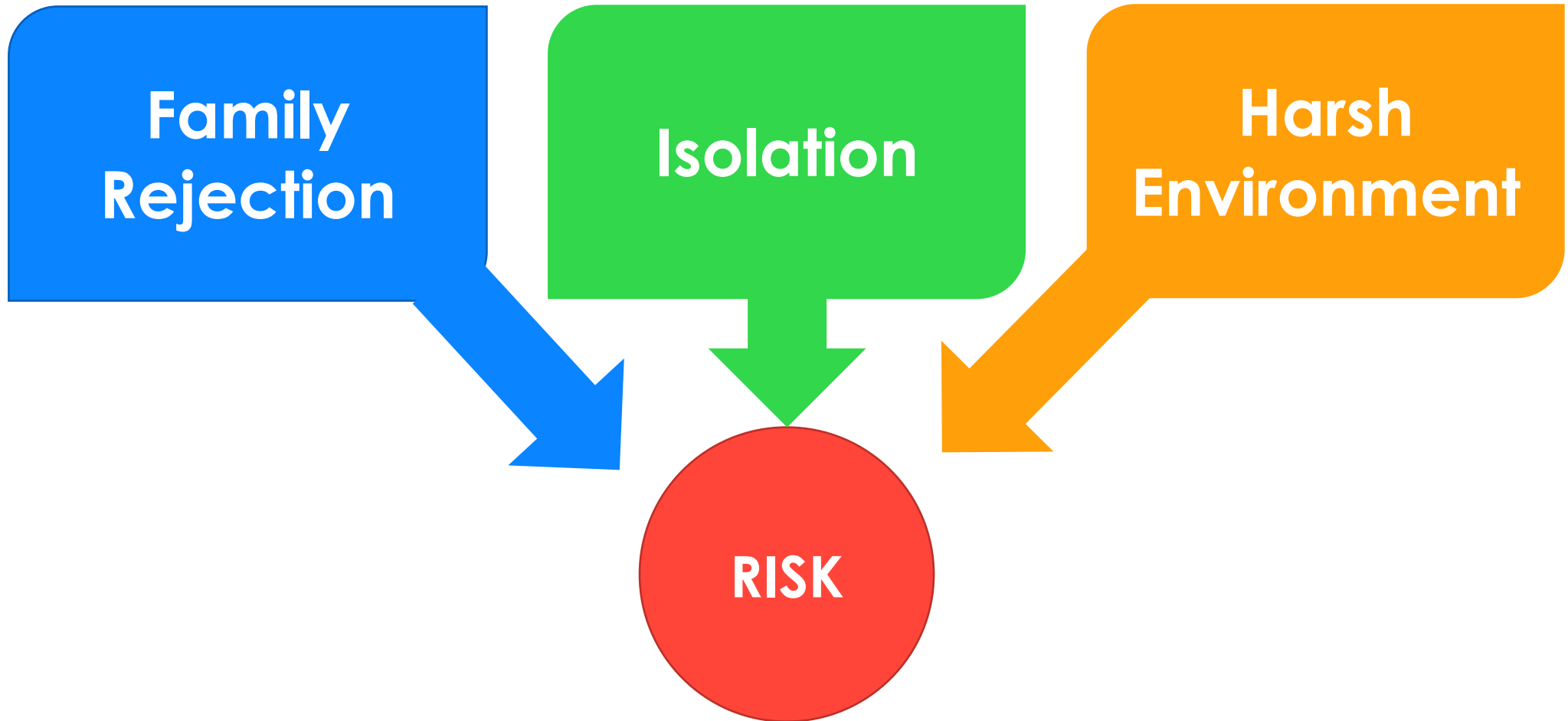


Key Considerations for Our Discussion

1. Being out, open, and authentic in who you are is liberating, beautiful, and something everyone should have access to. And being LGBTQ+ is absolutely fabulous!
2. LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk for mental health distress, violence, homelessness, etc. because of how they are treated NOT because they are LGBTQ+.
3. LGBTQ+ youth of color face even higher risks due to systemic racism compounded with homophobia and transphobia.



Common Pathways to Risk



LGBTQ+ Youth & Mental Health Risk

Suicide

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 3-5 times more likely to attempt suicide

42% of transgender people will attempt suicide in their lifetime

Self-Harm

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are 3 times more likely to engage in self-harm

20-45% of transgender people engage in self-harm behavior



Family Rejection

LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk to be disconnected from family of origin leaving them more likely to experience housing instability, homelessness, and interact with law enforcement.



What does family rejection look like?

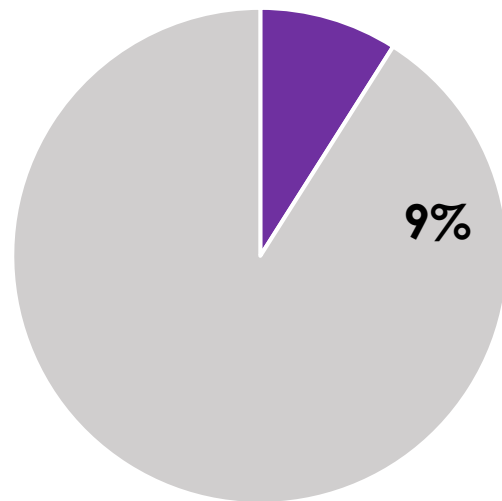
Studies show that when families exhibit these behaviors, it drastically increases the risk for mental health problems, including depression and suicidal ideation, among LGBTQ+ youth.

- Excluding youth from family and family activities
- Blocking their access to LGBTQ+ friends, events & resources
- Blaming the child when they are discriminated against because of their identity
- Pressuring the child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling the child that God will punish them because they are LGBTQ+
- Telling the child that the family is ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family
- Making the child keep their identity a secret in the family and not letting them talk about it



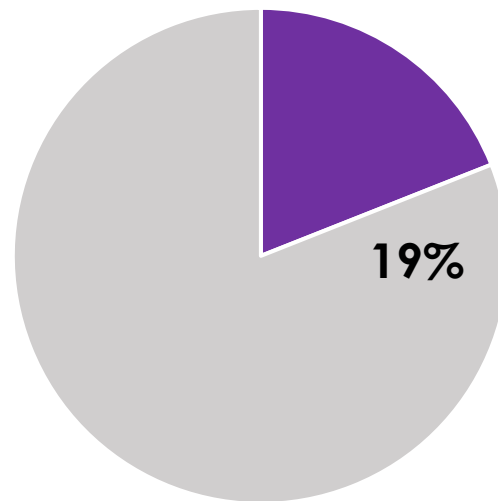
LGBTQ+ Youth & Housing Instability

**LGBTQ Youth in
the US**



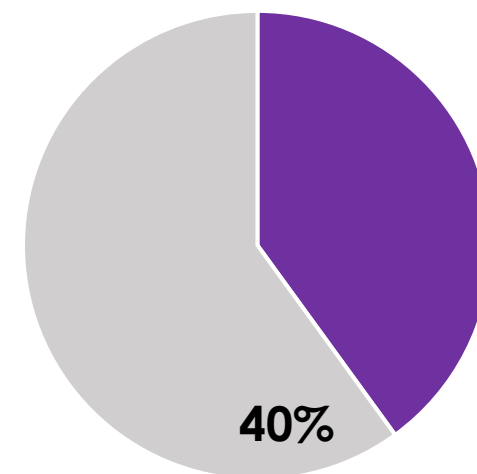
■ LGBTQ Youth
■ Non-LGBTQ Youth

**LGBTQ Youth in
the Foster System**



■ LGBTQ Youth
■ Non-LGBTQ Youth

**LGBTQ Youth
Experiencing
Homelessness**



■ LGBTQ Youth
■ Non-LGBTQ Youth

LGBTQ+ Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Experience	LGBTQ+ Youth	General Youth
Being Robbed	30%	21%
Physically Assaulted	28%	18%
Sexually Assaulted	22%	7%
Victim of a Hate Crime	33%	N/A
Engaged in Survival Sex Work	43%	12%



LGBTQ+ Youth & Survival Sex Work

- Survival sex work is trading sex for basic needs including food and shelter
- Often underage LGBTQ+ youth will find shelter with older men where they exchange sex for a home
- A 2015 study noted that over 50% of LGBTQ+ youth engaged in survival sex work used the money for food
- LGBTQ+ youth are most likely to get connected to survival sex work from friends and peers
- LGBTQ+ youth engaged in survival sex work put them at risk for arrest and incarceration



Isolation

LGBTQ+ youth are often isolated from traditional support networks including family and peers. This can lead to escapist behavior including alcohol and drug use as well as a desire for love and support from anywhere they can find it.



Five Dimensions of Isolation Among LGBTQ+ Youth

1. **Recognition that self is different:** recognizing that your experience isn't typical often creates initial feelings of isolation.
2. **Social Isolation:** not able to talk to anyone about their identity.
3. **Emotional Isolation:** feeling separated (emotionally) from important networks, like family.
4. **Cognitive Isolation:** lack of LGBTQ-specific information or role models. Or, much of the information they are exposed to is negative and harmful, and thus only reinforces the feeling of isolation.
5. **Concealment of Identity:** pressures to be "like everyone else" and conform to others' expectations.



LGBTQ+ Youth & Substance Use

LGBTQ+ youth are...

- 1.3 x more likely heavily use alcohol
- 1.6 x more likely to use marijuana
- 2.9 x more likely to use injection drugs
- 3.3 x more likely to use cocaine

Alcohol and drugs are often used as unhealthy coping strategies to deal with isolation as well as family rejection and harsh environments.



Harsh Environment

LGBTQ+ youth face harsh environments at home and very often at school. The violence and harassment they face leads to more interactions with law enforcement as well as the school to prison pipeline.



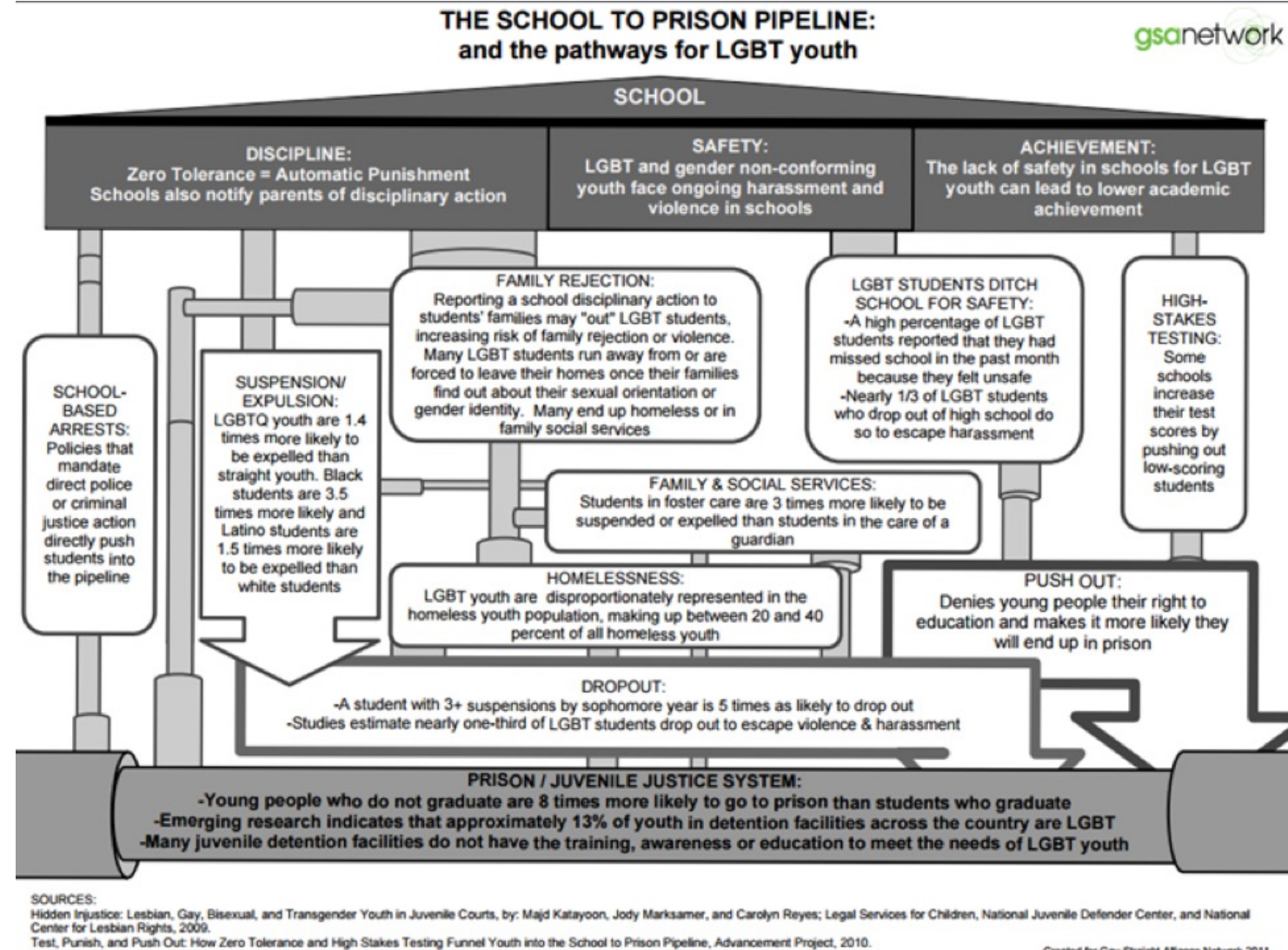
LGBTQ+ Youth Experiences in School

- 95% of LGBTQ+ students heard homophobic remarks including slurs at school with over 50% hearing them frequently or often
- Over 50% of LGBTQ+ students reported hearing homophobic remarks from school staff and teachers
- 1 in 4 LGBTQ+ students were physically harassed at school due to their sexual orientation
- 58% of LGBTQ+ students reported sexual harassment in school (unwanted touching and/or sexual remarks)



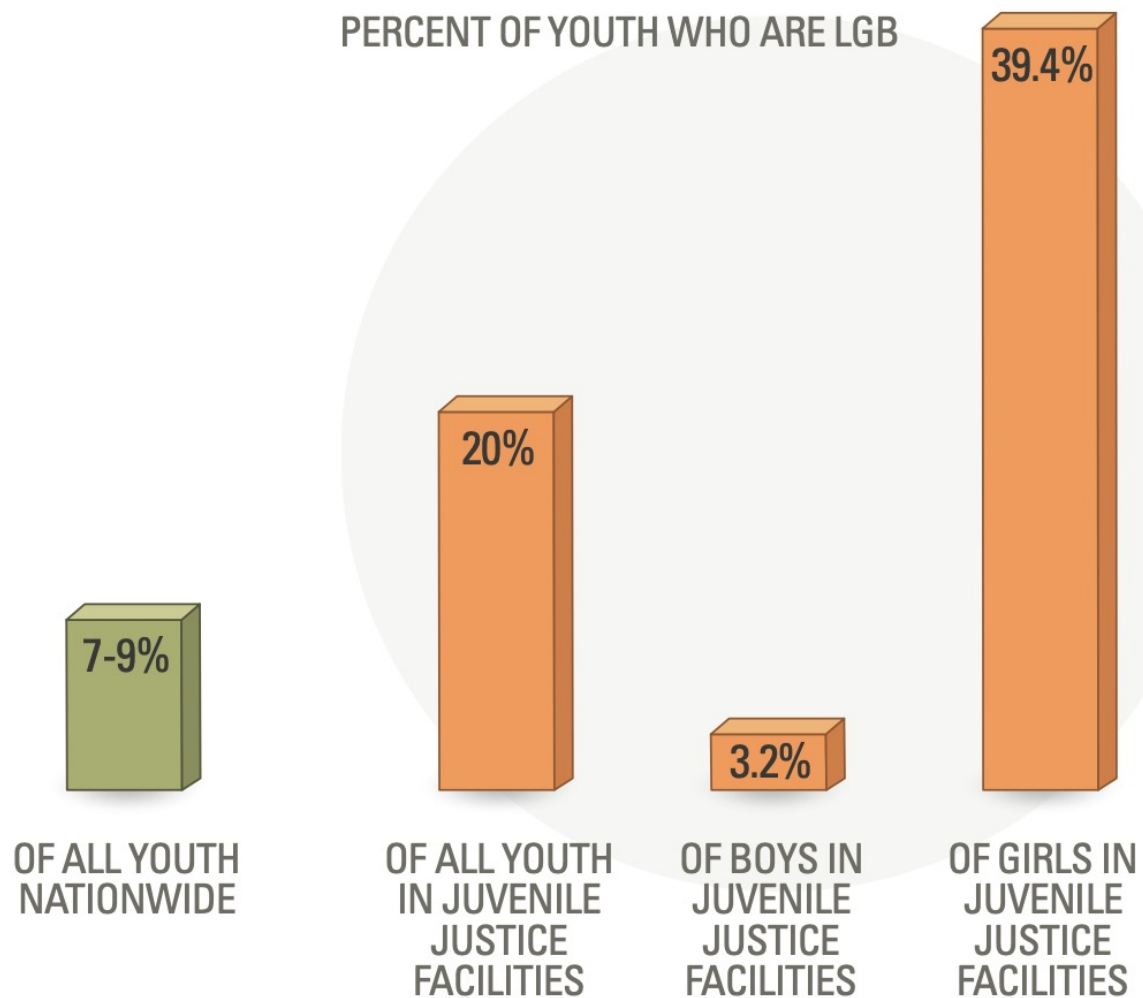
School to Prison Pipeline & LGBTQ+ Youth

- **Over Disciplined** – LGBTQ+ are more likely to be disciplined in school including for dress code violations, or for bringing a date of the same gender to a school dance
- **Bullying** – LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to be physically assaulted and often face disciplinary action for “fighting” even if they are simply the victim
- **Lack of Family Support** – LGBTQ+ youth are less likely to have support from their family to advocate on their behalf and push back against unjust disciplinary action
- **School Push Out** – In some schools, LGBTQ+ youth are viewed as a “distraction” for other students and are often the target of school push out

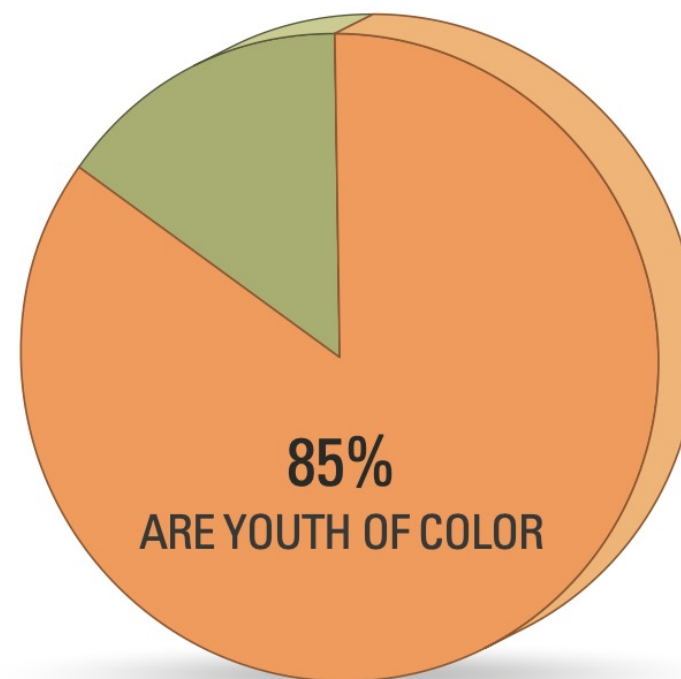


LGB YOUTH OVERREPRESENTED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

PERCENT OF YOUTH WHO ARE LGB



OF LGBT AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING YOUTH IN JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITIES



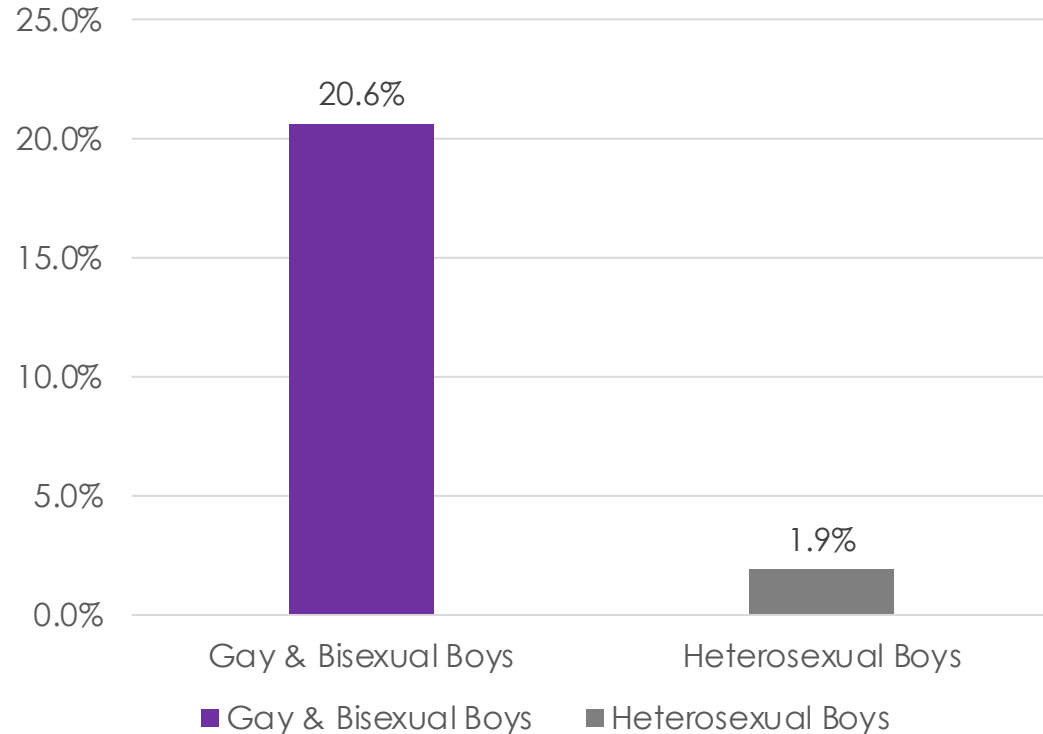
LGBTQ+ Youth Experiences in Detention

- LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of harassment and violence from peers and staff in detention.
- Transgender and intersex youth are often placed in the wrong facilities as detention centers don't often follow the rules of placement under PREA.
- Inadequate health care while in the facility, including sometimes being required to seek counseling for sex offenders simply for being LGBTQ+.
- Often disconnected from family and outside support system.

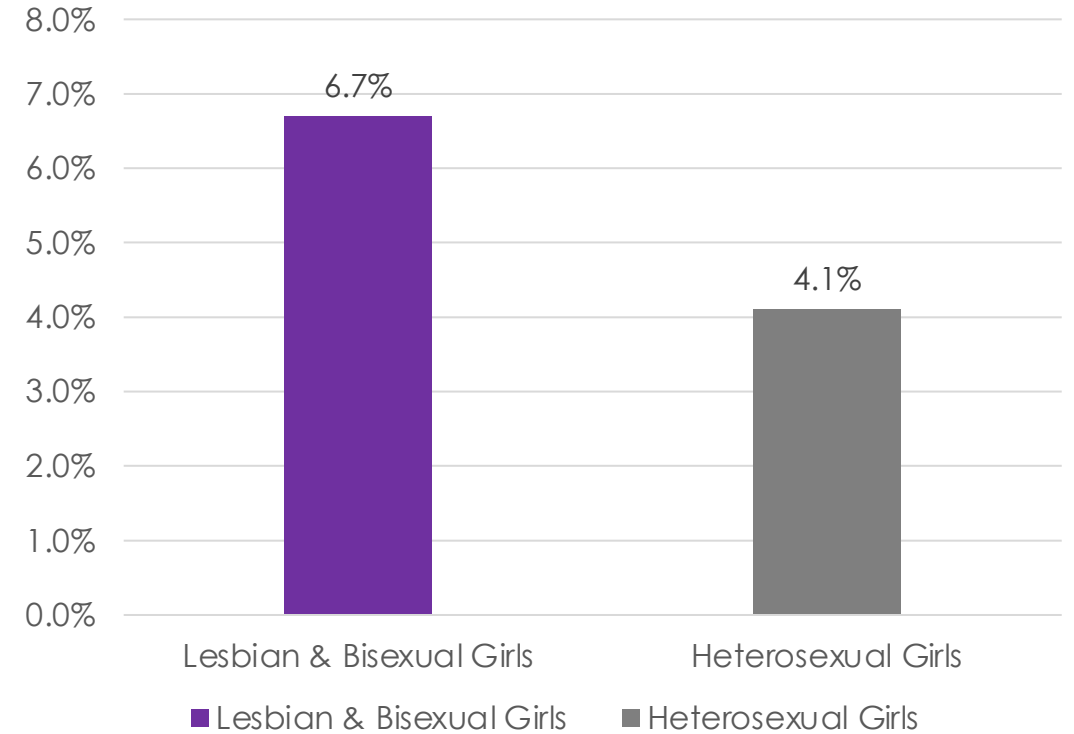


Youth Reported Peer Sexual Assault in Detention

Boys

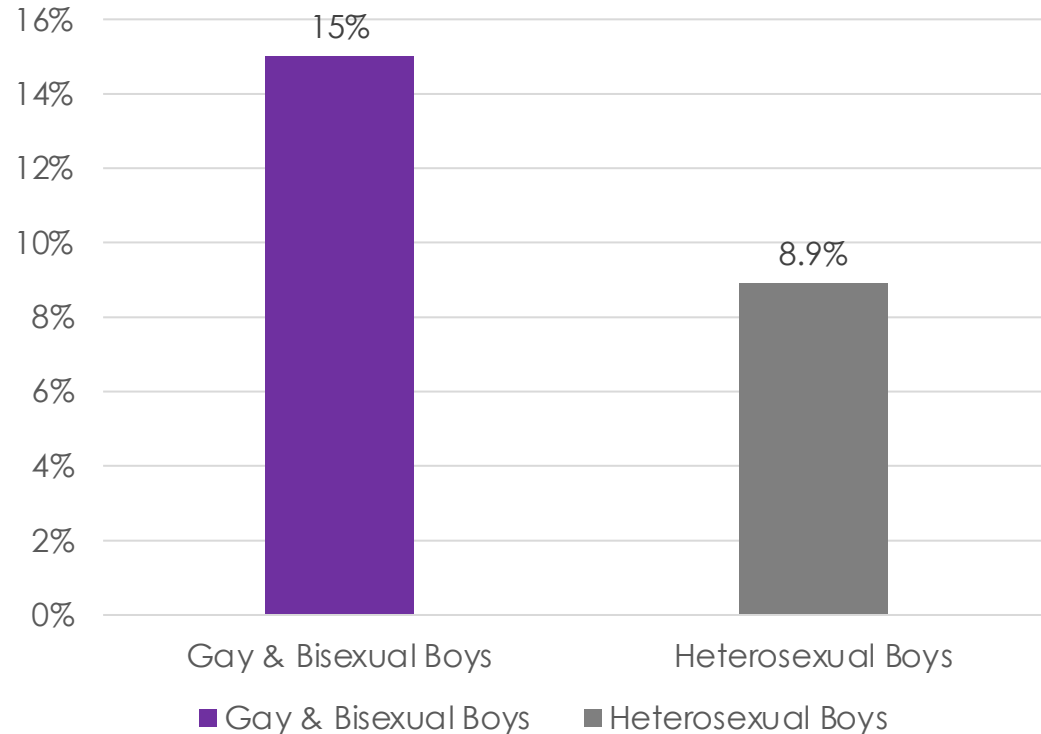


Girls

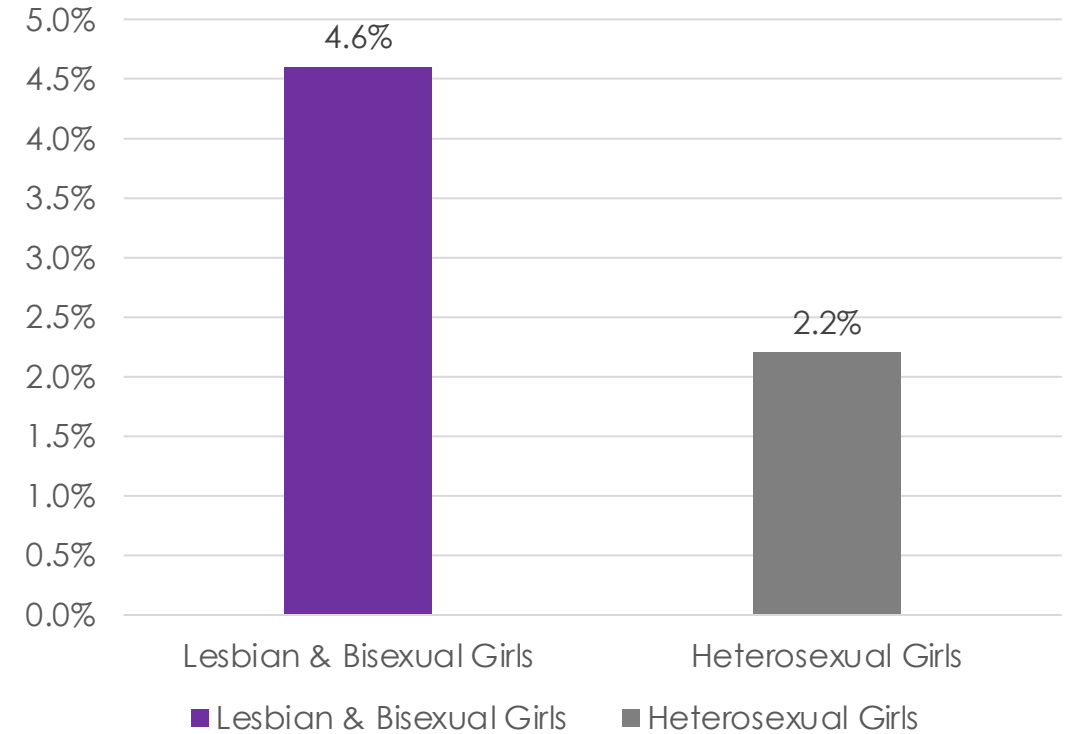


Youth Reported Sexual Contact by Staff in Detention

Boys



Girls



Sexual Offenses & LGBTQ+ Youth

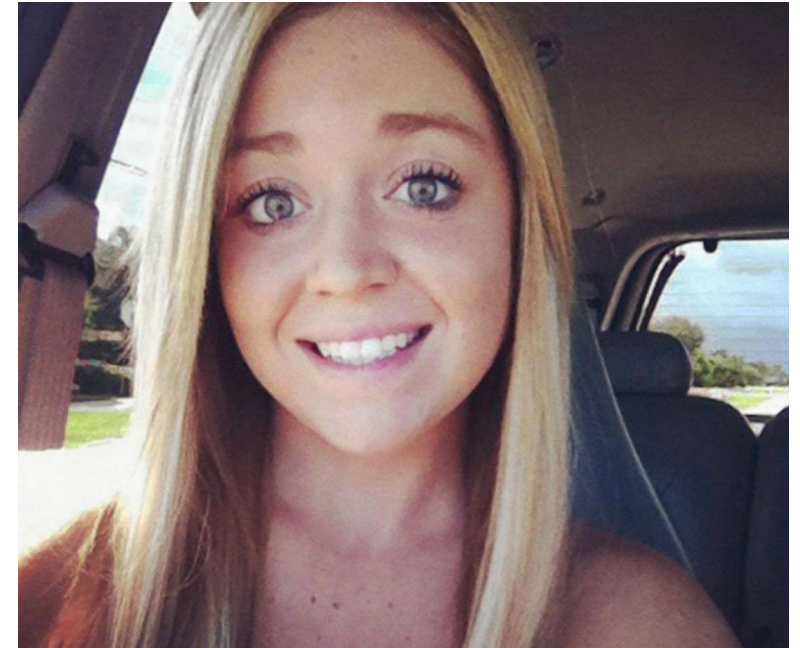
LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to be labeled as “sex offenders” because...

- More likely to be engaged in survival sex work
- More likely to engage in sexual activity while incarcerated and this same-sex sexual activity is viewed as sexual violence even if it is consensual
- Transgender youth have been threatened with sexual offenses simply for using the bathroom that corresponds to their gender identity
- More likely to be prosecuted for age-appropriate consensual sexual activity than their heterosexual and cisgender peers



Kaitlyn Hunt's Story (2013)

- Kaitlyn was an 18-year-old high school senior in Florida
- She had a romantic and sexual relationship with a 14-year-old teammate from her HS basketball team
- According to Kaitlyn, the 14-year-old's mother brought charges against Kaitlyn for "making my daughter gay"
- Kaitlyn was initially charged with two felony counts of lewd and lascivious battery on a child 12 to 16, which could have resulted in her being on the sex offender registry
- Ultimately, Kaitlyn pleaded no contest to two counts misdemeanor battery, misdemeanor contributing to the dependency of a child and two counts of felony interference with child custody, the deal came after significant media coverage and outside pressure



Break Time

Please return at 11:15am.

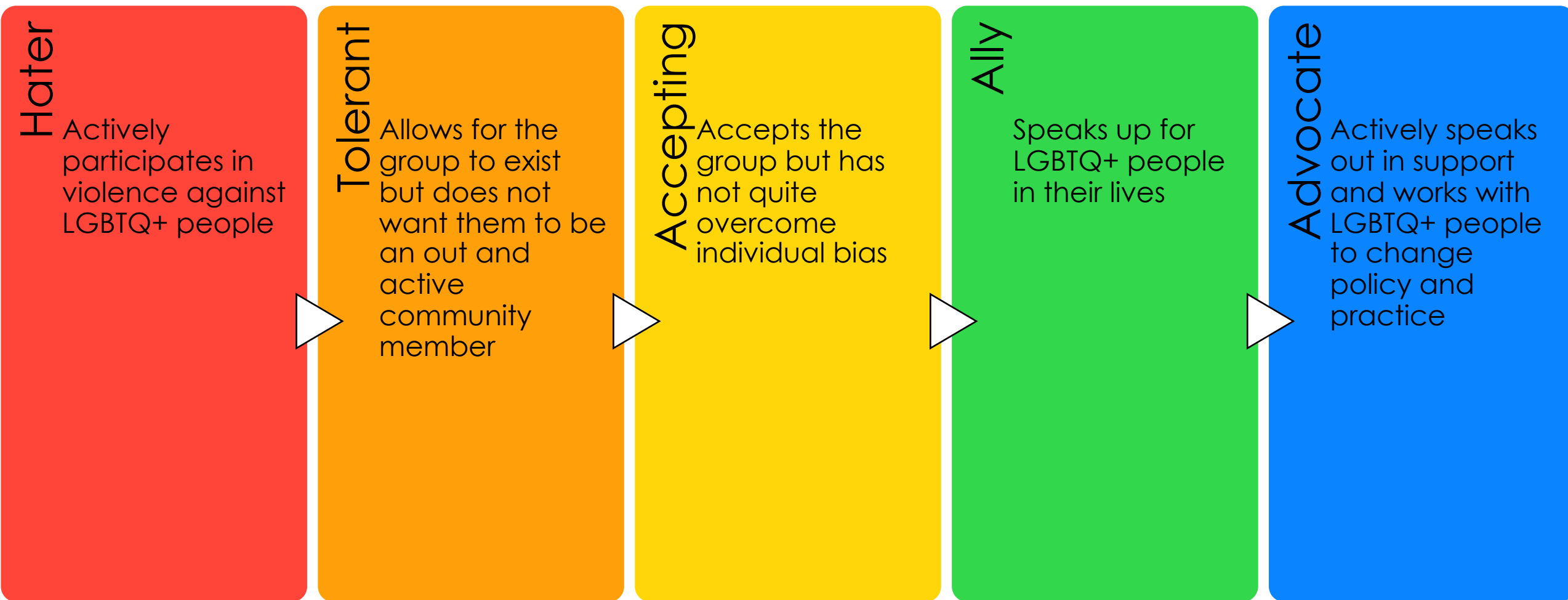


Key Protective Factors

- Trusted and caring adults
- Knowledgeable community (trained adults)
- LGBTQ+ youth seeing themselves represented positively in their community (possibility models)
- LGBTQ+ youth connecting with other LGBTQ+ youth and strong allies
- Continued emotional support through the coming out process



Spectrum of Support



Allyship Behavior

1. **LISTEN** – Every youth is unique and will have unique needs, listening to them builds trust and rapport.
2. **Platinum Rule** – Treat others the way THEY wish to be treated.
3. **Recognize & Celebrate Differences** - LGBTQ+ youth do not navigate the world the same way as heterosexual and cisgender youth; they should be treated equitably, not equally.
4. **Speak Up & Speak Out** – Speak out against homophobia and transphobia wherever you see it.
5. **Don't be a Jerk** – Avoid stereotypes of LGBTQ+ people and don't engage in harm against LGBTQ+ people.



The Importance of Names & Pronouns

Using the Right Name

Transgender youth who were called by their chosen name consistently at school, home, work, and with friends experienced...

- **71% fewer symptoms of severe depression**
- **34% decrease in reported thoughts of suicide**
- **65% decrease in suicide attempts**

Using the Right Pronoun

Transgender and non-binary youth who reported having people respect their pronouns all or most of the people in their lives attempted suicide by **half the rate** of those who did not have their pronouns respected.



Heterocentrism / Ciscentrism (ideology)

"The Norm"
Society's
Expectations

Everyone is
heterosexual
& cisgender

Heterosexism / Cissexism (system)

Laws, Rules,
Policies,
Procedures

The system is
built to benefit
people who
are
heterosexual &
cisgender

Homophobia / Transphobia (individual)

Fear, Discomfort, Hatred

Individual repudiation of those who
are not heterosexual & cisgender



Example of Heterosexism/Cissexism (System Level)

Question: On college campuses why don't we have men and women share bedrooms? What are we afraid might happen?

College Goal: Ensure no roommates ever engage in sexual activity with each other.



Action: All men in the Blue Dorm and all women in the Red Dorm.



- Assumes everyone is heterosexual
- Assumes everyone is cisgender
- Assumes there are only two genders



How to Reevaluate Policy & Practice

- Recognize that most policies and procedures were created without ever considering how LGBTQ+ people would navigate them.
- Look at policies that segregate people by gender and ask how transgender and non-binary people would be able to participate given those policies.
- Work with LGBTQ+ people to adjust policies to meet their needs.



Resources for Youth – Side by Side VA

- Support groups for youth 11 – 20 years old (currently virtual)
- 1:1 mental health counseling for youth 11-20 years old
- Homelessness services for young adults 18-25 years old
- Training for K-12 schools and youth serving non-profits



Contact Information:

www.sidebysideva.org

info@sidebysideva.org

Youth Support Line – 888-644-4390



Resources for Parents & Family – PFLAG

- Support groups for parents and family of LGBTQ+ people
- National organization with local chapters
- Resources online for parents and family members



Contact Information:

www.pflag.org

www.pflagofrichmond.org

pflagrichmondva@gmail.com



Resources for Parents & Family

He She Ze & We

- Support groups for parents and family of transgender people of all ages
- Virginia organization with meetings in Central VA
- Playgroup for younger trans youth and families



Contact Information:

www.heshezeandwe.org

contact@heshezeandwe.org



Resources for Further Education

- GLSEN (www.glsen.org)
- GSA Network (www.gsanetwork.org)
- The Trevor Project (www.thetrevorproject.org)
- Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org/resources/lgbtq-youth)
- National Center for Transgender Equality (www.transequality.org/issues/youth-students)
- Gender Spectrum (www.genderspectrum.org)
- Teaching Tolerance (www.tolerance.org)



Questions & Discussion

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