



Inclusion of Transgenders in Educational Institutions

A Manual for Educators



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Developed by:



Contents

1. Context.....	1
Dismal state of education for transpersons in India	1
Hostile school/college environment	1
Greater Risk.....	2
Impact.....	2
2. Understanding the basic concepts.....	3
Sex.....	3
Gender.....	4
Sexual Orientation.....	5
Gender Identity.....	5
Gender Expression.....	6
Detailed glossary of terms.....	7
3. How to create an ideal climate for transpersons in educational institutes?.....	13
Role of teachers.....	13
Role of school/college counsellors.....	16
Role of school/college management.....	16

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1. Context

Dismal state of education for transpersons in India

In India, educational outcomes are dismal for gender and sexual minorities. They are likely to be much worse for transgender people. The 2011 Indian census included an 'other' gender option on the census form, and 490,000 individuals reported the 'other' option (0.04 percent of the Indian population of 1.2 billion people). Only 46 percent of those using the 'other' gender option were literate, compared with 74 percent of the population using the 'male' and 'female' options. The actual state of education for transpersons might be even more deplorable since the census data does not accurately capture the gender and sexual identities.

Hostile school/college environment

Transgender students face pervasive harassment and an overall hostile schooling environment in school/college premises at an alarmingly high rate. Although many sexual minority students face high levels of victimization in school/college, transgender students come across the highest levels of verbal and physical harassment. Transgender students are more likely than their peers to experience harassment and fear at school/college because their gender expression does not conform to traditional norms. With a higher risk of victimization, they feel unsafe at school/college, leading to high absenteeism and dropout rates when compared to their peers.

"I was born a biological male but as I grew older I gradually experienced changes in my attitude and mannerism. I felt and acted more as a girl. I was not comfortable being a boy and I didn't want to live my life as a boy. Then I got admission in a government boys school in a small town near Chandigarh. I was not comfortable studying there. I was harassed and sexually abused by my school mates because I was effeminate. And when I made complaints to the teachers and the principal they did not believe me. I felt very alone at that time."

-Transgender/Hijra community leader, Delhi

"I am part of the hijra community. I completed my B. Com from Mumbai university and then underwent a Sex Reassignment Surgery. Later on, I decided to go for a Masters in Social Work in a university in my hometown with the support of my parents. Most of the college staff and students were very good and friendly. But, when I had to submit my final dissertation project one of the faculty members asked me to have sex with him and threatened that he will not accept my dissertation if I refuse. I finally agreed to his demands because I had to think of my future."

-Transgender/Hijra community leader, Mumbai

Greater risk

Transgender students are at a greater risk of depression, anxiety, self-harm, and other health risk behaviours when compared to their cisgender and gender-normative peers.

Research shows various detrimental psychological outcomes of recurring bullying and victimization based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity, such as, higher instances of depression, suicides, and suicidal ideation (e.g., Ameida et al, 2009; D'Augelli, 2003; Savin Williams & Ream, 2003).

Impact

When educational institutions ignore sexist, homophobic, transphobic or any other kind of violent interactions between students, they give tacit approval to such behaviours. There is a multi-faceted impact of a hostile school/college climate on the overall well-being and future of transpersons. It leads to:

- Increased absenteeism
- Lower academic achievement
- Fewer plans for post-secondary education
- Poorer psychological well-being

Every citizen of India deserves **Right to Equality** under Article 14 of the Indian constitution, **Right against Discrimination** on the ground of religion, caste, sex or place of birth under Article 15, **Right to privacy and personal dignity** under Article 21 and **Right to Education** under Article 21 (A). Despite this gender and sexual minorities have faced discrimination and harassment in family, school, workplace and other areas of life. Transgenders, particularly, have had limited access to social and political rights.

On 15th April 2014, a landmark judgement was passed by the Supreme Court in India that recognised the rights of transgender people and said they should enjoy all the fundamental rights enshrined in the Indian constitution. The judgment – **National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India, colloquially called the NALSA judgment** – provided legal recognition for third gender. It also gave broad directives to the Central and state governments on affirmative action, public health, social welfare and other services to be made available for transgender people.

2. Understanding the basic concepts

The first step towards creating truly inclusive educational institutions for transpersons is to understand what this “stuff” is all about. This can be quite tricky since the conversation sexuality, gender identity, expression and identification is constantly evolving and the theoretical landscape is hardly monolithic. Although, there is no definitive way of understanding the nuances of gender and sexuality, here are a few terms that can get us started with the journey towards inclusiveness:

Sex



Sex refers to the biological, genetic, or physical characteristics that define males and females. These can include genitalia, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics.

Nearly everyone is assigned a sex at birth, and it tends to be one of two choices: Male or female. (Some individuals may be assigned the term “intersex” which refers to a variety of biological conditions in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy or hormone levels that do not fit the typical definitions of male or female. It is important to know that intersex and transgender are not interchangeable terms.)

The operative word here is “assigned”. When we talk about sex of an individual, it corresponds to what the doctor or the family referred to when the individual was born – “It’s a boy!” or “It’s a girl!”. The importance of the word “assigned” only gets clearer with the understanding of gender in the next section.

Gender



Gender refers to a set of social, psychological, and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations that classify an individual as “feminine” or “masculine”.

We hear about the traditional stereotypes about gender (e.g., women are nurturing while men are protective) all the time. These stereotypes, more often than not, shape our ways of life, attitudes, expectations and even life choices.



When someone steps outside the way that gender is understood in their society, it causes people to get a little rattled. For example, if a boy wants to play with dolls, and not rough sports like football, will have a number of conclusions drawn about him—and perhaps his sexual orientation, or even gender identity—because he’s stepped out of the typical space for boys and men.

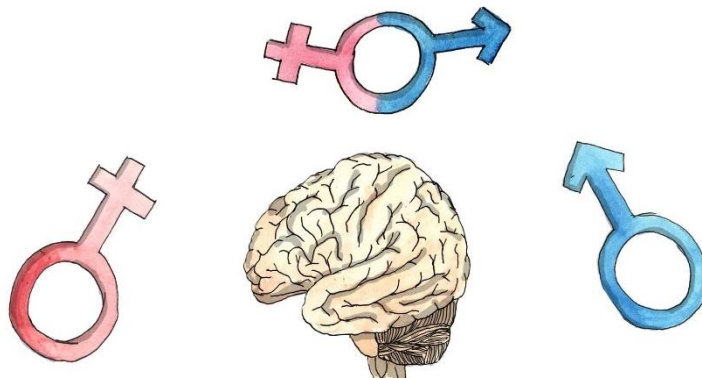
Gender is a remarkable manifestation of the power that society has on our ways of being and an indication of the possible consequences that happen when an individual (whether as a child or adult) steps outside the boundaries set by the society.

Sexual Orientation



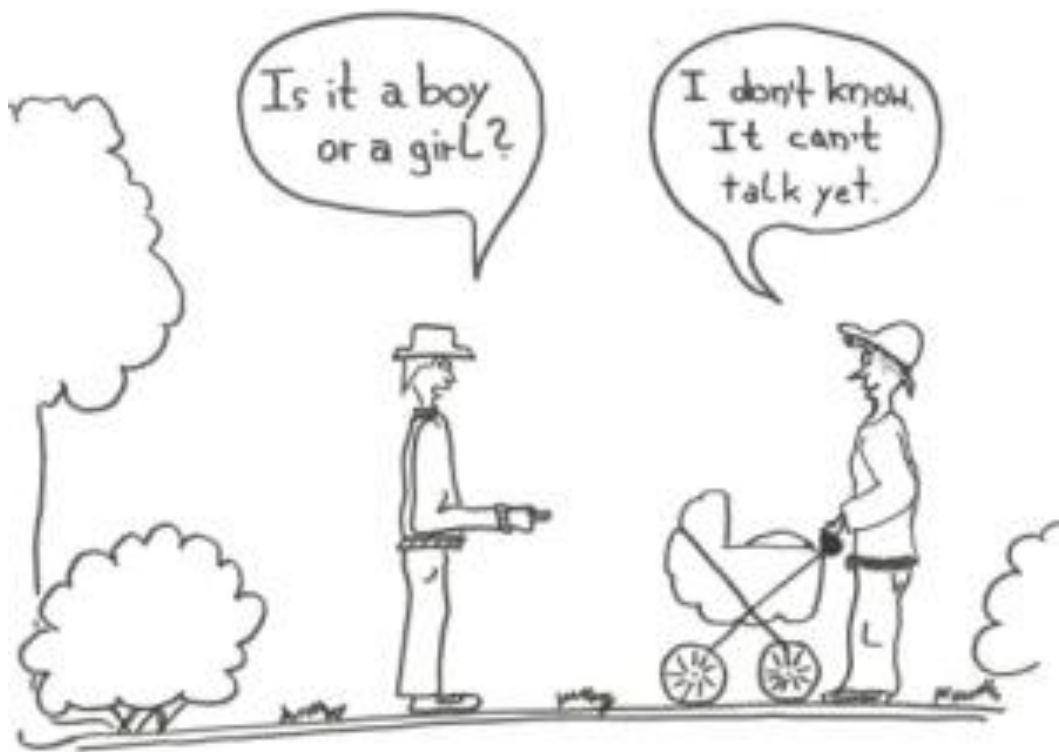
Sexual orientation refers to an individual's emotional, romantic, or sexual feelings towards other people. People who are heterosexual experience these feelings primarily for people of the opposite sex. People who are homosexual experience these feelings primarily for people of the same sex. People who are bisexual experience feelings for people of both sexes. And people who are asexual experience no or very little attraction to either sex.

Gender Identity



Gender identity is the term that is used to describe an individual's deeply held personal, internal sense of being male, female, some of both, or maybe even neither.

The important thing to note here is that a person's gender identity may not always correspond to their assigned biological sex.



While an individual, at birth, may be assigned the term “male” based on biological characteristics, that person might not necessarily feel as though they are male, or were intended to be male. For them, there’s a disconnect that happens between what they may see on the outside (a male body, leading to the assumption that the person will identify as male) and how the individual sees themselves (a person who identifies as female but who is living inside a body that was assigned male).

Gender Expression

Gender expression is something you can see. It includes the way in which a person communicates their gender identity to others through external means such as clothing, mannerisms, speech patterns, and social interactions that are traditionally linked to how we read masculinity or femininity.

Some individuals may embrace a gender expression that is outside of these two opposite points, or binaries. Many individuals may have a more androgynous—or gender-neutral—expression. Some individuals may embrace a more fluid expression, at times presenting as female, at others presenting as male. Some people refer to being non-binary, which generally means that they do not see themselves on any of the more traditional understandings of gender as rigid and inflexible.

Biological sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression are not dependent on each other, but can be interconnected

A detailed list of terms included in the glossary will help your understanding further. However, it is important to keep in mind that the terminology is constantly evolving and that some people may have differences in how they understand certain words, and preferences for how they describe themselves. What is crucial is to remember to listen to each individual and respect their identifications.

Detailed Glossary of terms (compiled from resources available online)

advocate – (noun): a person who actively works to end intolerance, educate others, and support social equity for a marginalized group. (verb): to actively support/plea in favour of a particular cause, the action of working to end intolerance, educate others, etc.

agender – (adj.): a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender *neutrois*, gender neutral, or genderless.

ally – (noun): a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ community. We consider people to be active allies who take action on in support and respect.

androgyny/ous – (adj.): a gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity; occasionally used in place of “intersex” to describe a person with both female and male anatomy.

androsexual / androphilic – (adj.): being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to men, males, and/or masculinity.

aromantic – (adj.): experiencing little or no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships/behaviour. Aromanticism exists on a continuum from people who experience no romantic attraction or have any desire for romantic activities, to those who experience low levels, or romantic attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demiromantic).

asexual – (adj.): experiencing little or no sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest in sexual relationships/behaviour. Asexuality exists on a continuum from people who experience no sexual attraction or have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels, or sexual attraction only under specific conditions, and many of these different places on the continuum have their own identity labels (see demisexual).

- Asexuality is different from celibacy in that it is a sexual orientation whereas celibacy is an abstaining from a certain action.
- Not all asexual people are aromantic.

bigender – (adj.): a person who fluctuates between traditionally “woman” and “man” gender-based behaviour and identities, identifying with both genders (and sometimes a third gender).

bicurious – (adj.): a curiosity about experiencing attraction to people of the same gender/sex (similar to questioning).

biological sex – (noun): a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply “sex,” “physical sex,” “anatomical sex,” or specifically as “sex assigned at birth.”

- Often seen as a binary but as there are many combinations of chromosomes, hormones, and primary/secondary sex characteristics, it’s more accurate to view this

as a spectrum (which is more inclusive of intersex people as well as trans*-identified people).

biphobia – (noun): a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, invisibility, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have or express towards bisexual individuals. Biphobia can come from and be seen within the LGBTQ community as well as straight society.

biphobic – (adj.): a word used to describe an individual who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards bisexual people.

- Important to recognize that many of our “stereotypes” of bisexual people - they’re overly sexual, greedy, it’s just a phase - have harmful and stigmatizing effects (and that it is not only straight people but also many queer individuals harbour these beliefs too).

bisexual – (adj.): a person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some males/men and females/women. A person who is emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to people of their gender and another gender. This attraction does not have to be equally split or indicate a level of interest that is the same across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to.

cisgender – (adj.): a person whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity align (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a man). A simple way to think about it is if a person is not transgender, they are cisgender. The word cisgender can also be shortened to “cis.” - “Cis” is a latin prefix that means “on the same side [as]” or “on this side [of].”

closeted – (adj.) : an individual who is not open to themselves or others about their (queer) sexuality or gender identity. This may be by choice and/or for other reasons such as fear for one’s safety, peer or family rejection, or disapproval and/or loss of housing, job, etc. Also known as being “in the closet.” When someone chooses to break this silence they “come out” of the closet. (See coming out)

coming out: the process by which one accepts and/or comes to identify one’s own sexuality or gender identity (to “come out” to oneself). It is also the process by which one shares one’s sexuality or gender identity with others (to “come out” to friends, family etc.).

- This is a continual, life-long process. Everyday, all the time, one has to evaluate and re-evaluate who they are comfortable coming out to, if it is safe, and what the consequences might be.

cross-dresser – (noun): someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.

demiromantic – (adj.): little or no capacity to experience romantic attraction until a strong sexual or emotional connection is formed with another individual, often within a sexual relationship.

demisexual – (adj.): little or no capacity to experience sexual attraction until a strong romantic or emotional connection is formed with another individual, often within a romantic relationship.

drag king – (noun): someone who performs masculinity theatrically.

drag queen – (noun): someone who performs femininity theatrically.

dyke – (noun): referring to a masculine presenting lesbian. While often used derogatorily, it is adopted affirmatively by many lesbians (both more masculine and more feminine presenting lesbians) as a positive self-identity term.

emotional attraction – (noun): a capacity that evokes the want to engage in emotionally intimate behaviour (e.g., sharing, confiding, trusting, interdepending), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with sexual attraction, romantic attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

fag(got) – (noun): derogatory term referring to a gay person, or someone perceived as queer. Occasionally used as a self-identifying affirming term by some gay men, at times in the shortened form ‘fag’.

FtM / F2M; MtF / M2F – (abbreviation): female-to-male transgender or transsexual person; male-to-female transgender or transsexual person.

gay – (adj.): individuals who are primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex and/or gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men, and can be applied to women as well. An umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual.

gender binary – (noun): the idea that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

gender expression – (noun): the external display of one’s gender, through a combination of dress, demeanour, social behaviour, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as “gender presentation.”

gender fluid – (adj.): a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.

gender identity – (noun): the internal perception of one’s gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don’t align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Common identity labels include man, woman, genderqueer, trans*, and more. Gender identity should not be confused with biological sex, or sex assigned at birth.

gender non-conforming – (adj.): a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man)

genderqueer – (adj.): a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (e.g., agender, bigender, genderfluid).

gender variant – (adj.): someone who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, intersex, gender-queer, cross-dresser, etc).

gynesexual / gynephilic – (adj.): being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to woman, females, and/or femininity.

hermaphrodite – (noun): an outdated medical term previously used to refer to someone who was born with some combination of typically-male and typically-female sex characteristics. It’s considered stigmatizing and inaccurate. See intersex.

heteronormativity – (noun): the assumption, in individuals and/or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities. Leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities. Eg. when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband’s name is. Heteronormativity also leads us to assume that only masculine men and feminine women are straight.

heterosexual – (adj.): a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. Also known as straight.

homophobia – (noun): an umbrella term for a range of negative attitudes (e.g., fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have towards members of LGBTQ community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ.

homophobic – (adj.): a word used to describe an individual who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes towards gay people.

homosexual – (adj. & noun): a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to members of the same sex/gender. The term is considered stigmatizing (particularly as a noun) due to its history as a category of mental illness, and is discouraged for common use (use gay or lesbian instead).

- Until 1973 “Homosexuality” was classified as a mental disorder in the DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is just one of the reasons that there are such heavy negative and clinical connotations with this term.

intersex – (adj.): term for a combination of chromosomes, gonads, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female. Formerly known as hermaphrodite (or hermaphroditic), but these terms are now outdated and derogatory.

- Often seen as a problematic condition when babies or young children are identified as intersex, it was for a long time considered an “emergency” and something that doctors moved to “fix” right away in a new-born child. There has been increasing advocacy and awareness brought to this issue and many individuals advocate that intersex individuals should be allowed to remain intersex past infancy and to not treat the condition as an issue or medical emergency.

lesbian – (noun & adj.): women who are primarily attracted romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally to other women.

metrosexual – (adj.): a man with a strong aesthetic sense who spends more time, energy, or money on his appearance and grooming than is considered gender normative.

MSM / WSW – (abbreviations): men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women, to distinguish sexual behaviours from sexual identities. Often used in HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and treatment.

pansexual – (adj.): a person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions. Often shortened to “pan.”

polyamory / polyamorous – (noun, adj.): refers to the practice of, desire to, or orientation towards having ethical, honest, and consensual non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners).

queer – (adj.): used as an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight. or have a non-normative gender identity. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, it is not embraced or used by all members of the LGBTQ community. The term “queer” can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., “queer folks” instead of “LGBTQ folks”).

questioning – (verb, adj.): an individual who or time when someone is unsure about or exploring their own sexual orientation or gender identity.

sex assigned at birth – phrase used to intentionally recognize a person’s assigned sex based on biological sex (not gender identity).

sexual attraction – (noun): a capacity that evokes the want to engage in physically intimate behavior (e.g., kissing, touching, intercourse), experienced in varying degrees (from little-to-none, to intense). Often conflated with romantic attraction, emotional attraction, and/or spiritual attraction.

sexual orientation – (noun): the type of sexual, romantic, emotional/spiritual attraction one has the capacity to feel for some others, generally labelled based on the gender relationship between the person and the people they are attracted to. Often confused with sexual preference.

sex reassignment surgery (SRS) – (noun): used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person's biological sex. "Gender confirmation surgery" is considered by many to be a more affirming term. In most cases, one or multiple surgeries are required to achieve legal recognition of gender variance. Some refer to different surgical procedures as "top" surgery and "bottom" surgery to discuss what type of surgery they are having without having to be more explicit.

skoliosexual – (adj.): being primarily sexually, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to some genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and/or non-binary people.

straight – (adj.): a person primarily emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to some people who are not their same sex/gender. A more colloquial term for the word heterosexual.

third gender – (noun): for a person who does not identify with either man or woman, but identifies with another gender. This gender category is used by societies that recognise three or more genders, both contemporary and historic, and is also a conceptual term meaning different things to different people who use it, as a way to move beyond the gender binary.

top surgery – (noun): this term refers to surgery for the construction of a male-type chest or breast augmentation for a female-type chest.

trans* – (adj.): An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

- Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).
- Trans people can be straight, gay, bisexual, queer, or any other sexual orientation.
- Because sexuality labels (e.g., gay, straight, bi) are generally based on the relationship between the person's gender and the genders they are attracted to, trans* sexuality can be defined in several ways.

transgender – (adj.): A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that assigned at birth based on anatomical sex.

transition / transitioning – (noun, verb): this term is primarily used to refer to the process a trans* person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.

transman – (noun): Identity label sometimes adopted by female-to-male transgender people or transsexuals to signify that they are men while still affirming their history as assigned female sex at birth.

transwoman – (noun): Identity label sometimes adopted by male-to-female transsexuals or transgender people to signify that they are women while still affirming their history as assigned male sex at birth.

Hijra – cultural identity and community referring to a transwoman who is part of the hijra community. The community is complex and diverse with numerous rituals, customs and rules. The community works under a gharana (ritual 'houses'/'families') system with a hierarchy of 'guru-chelas' (loosely meaning teacher-students).



A hijra person undergoes a 'reet', ritual where a young man enters a hijra gharana through ritual offerings made to the Guru. Usually after such a ceremony it is difficult for young biological males to return to their biological families as the Guru demands total loyalty.

Jogtas/ Jogappas/ Shiv- Shaktis are Hindu hijras who are male temple prostitutes or devdasis. They are mostly male children dedicated to goddesses who ritually cross-dress for religious purposes.

transphobia – (noun): the fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of trans* people, the trans* community, or gender ambiguity. Transphobia can be seen within the queer community, as well as in general society.

- Transphobia is often manifested in violent and deadly means. Trans* people are far more likely than their cisgender or LGB peers to be the victims of violent crimes.

transphobic – (adj.): a word used to describe an individual who harbours some elements of this range of negative attitudes, thoughts, intents, towards trans* people.

transsexual – (noun and adj.): a person who identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the one to which they were assigned at birth. Transsexuals often wish to transform their bodies hormonally and surgically to match their inner sense of gender/sex.

transvestite – (noun): a person who dresses as the binary opposite gender expression ("cross-dresses"), often called a "cross-dresser," and should not be confused with transsexual.

ze / zir / "zee", "zerr" or "zeer" – alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some trans* people. They replace "he" and "she" and "his" and "hers" respectively. Alternatively, some people who are not comfortable/do not embrace he/she use the plural pronoun "they/their" as a gender neutral singular pronoun.

This list is neither comprehensive nor inviolable, but a work in progress towards capturing something that is constantly evolving.

3. How to create an ideal climate for transpersons in educational institutes?

It is critical for educators to keep in mind that being a transperson does not necessarily put someone at increased risk for negative outcomes; rather, being in hostile, unsafe, and unsupported environments put children and youth at increased risk.

What is a truly inclusive school/college environment for transpersons?

- Where that all students are made to feel safe, welcomed, and supported
- Where everyone respects the gender and sexual identity and expression of others

Role of teachers

Creating an inclusive classroom and school/college environment

Teachers play a crucial role in creating an inclusive classroom and school/college environment. Small steps that assure students that there are people in their school/college who will listen to and support them regardless of their actual or perceived differences, go a long way.

It is important that teachers reflect on how their own understanding of gender influences their teaching and subsequently the classroom environment.

Questions to ask yourself

How is gender represented in your classroom? Do you separate students according to their gender for activities? Do passing comments that reinforce gender discrimination (eg. You are acting like a girl!) go unchecked?

How are the gender representations and reinforcements in classrooms related to traditional social and cultural understandings of masculinity and femininity? How are men and women represented in textbooks? How are the gender-based roles represented? Are women often

represented as relegated to subsidiary positions? Are there enough women and gender-diverse role models known to students in different walks of life?

What are the effects of these representations on youth who do not conform to traditional gender norms and sex role stereotypes?

Some of the ways to promote gender inclusivity are:

Avoid Using Gender to Divide and Address Students

Use inclusive phrases like “Good Morning, everyone”, instead of gendered ones like “Good Morning, Boys and Girls”. Avoid situations that force students to make gendered choices, such as gender-segregated seating arrangements, group formations etc. This can leave some students feeling out-of-place, making them distracted or isolated and not able to focus on learning.

Using the right names and pronouns

All students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. A legal change of name or gender designation is not required.

Gender consistent physical education and sports participation

Physical education classes are required in most schools, and sports participation is valued by many students in schools and colleges. Where there are sex-segregated classes or athletic activities, students should be allowed to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

Challenge transphobic and homophobic comments and jokes

It is important that teachers do not laugh at an offending joke. Teachers need to directly challenge all inappropriate comments, thereby signalling a caring attitude and identifying themselves as someone safe to talk to. Teachers can also conduct a class activity asking students to list all of the sexist, homophobic, and transphobic terms they can think of and then discuss and demystify the messages and stereotypes they often convey.

Identify noted people from gender and sexual minorities in society and history

Gender variant people have existed throughout history and in a wide variety of cultures, occupations, and religions around the world. It helps to bring recognition to the lives of people from gender and sexual minorities in society and history.

Develop a Gender Expansive Environment

It is helpful to show pictures and videos that challenge gender stereotypes. Teachers can demonstrate that women can be firefighters and doctors and that men can be nurses and stay-at-home parents and encourage discussions among students on people in their lives who challenge gender stereotypes. Allocation of classroom duties should reflect gender neutrality. Boys and girls should participate equally in maintaining cleanliness, observing classroom decorum, decorating the class and conducting routine classroom chores.

Conforming to traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity can be limiting, not only to transgender students, but to all students.

Intervention in the case of harassment

First things first: Stop!

It is important to immediately stop the behaviour:

Stop it right now!

Leave her/him alone!

That is unacceptable!

Don't Ignore it...

Harassment does not go away on its own. Ignoring any form of harassment or even name-calling and hurtful teasing sends a message to students that there is nothing wrong with it. And it teaches the student who is targeted that they will not be protected from harassment.

Taking action reaffirms limits and your commitment to not allow any form of harassment before it gets worse.

Educating

It is often not enough to just stop the behaviour. Educating students about the impact of transphobic and homophobic bullying is a crucial step. It will not only be an invaluable lesson for life for a child who was bullying or was a bystander, it will also be a source of moral strength for the child who was targeted. By doing so, a teacher might be preventing a much more serious assault or a suicide down the road. It is worth the time and energy you put in!

Through timely action, a teacher might be preventing a much more serious assault or a suicide down the road.

Some messages that can be used while educating children on an event of harassment or bullying:

- “Stereotypes are nothing more than lies that hurt people's feelings.”
 - “Stereotyping, harassment or bullying based on someone’s gender identity or sexual orientation is against the ethos of our school/college (name of the school/college).”
 - “You may not have meant to hurt anyone, but that was really offensive. It implied being feminine/masculine/Transgender/Gay/Lesbian as an insult.”
 - “That is bullying/harassment and it is against school rules. It could get you suspended”
 - “What business is it of yours if somebody is Gay/Lesbian/Masculine/Feminine/Transgender?”
- Seeing you stand up against bullying and harassment will make every child, whether they are transgender or not, feel safer at school. Only when they feel safe, can students learn.

The bottom line is ... Legally and ethically, you must do whatever is necessary to stop harassment.

Role of school/college counsellors

Counsellors in schools and colleges are in a unique position to provide support, advocacy, and resources that will help create safe, inclusive and welcoming educational climates for students from gender and sexual minorities. A positive connection with counsellors in schools and colleges brings a sense of belongingness and safety for students. It also helps enhance healthy coping skills, build resiliency, and facilitate positive socio-emotional development.

In light of their experience working with sensitive and confidential information, counsellors can help advocate for the development and implementation of policies that respect the right to privacy for students, staff, and family members with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or transgender status. They can help educate administrators, staff, students, and faculty, on the importance of respecting privacy and confidentiality in creating a safe environment for gender and sexual minorities.

Role of school/college management

Educators can help create a safe and inclusive school climate for transpersons. Some of the ways that they can do so are:

- Creating, implementing, and enforcing a comprehensive bullying/harassment policy that specifically addresses bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity/ expression
- Training staff on the policy and disseminating the policy to all the students and staff can help ensure that the implementation of policy is not reliant on the good will and efforts of individuals, but that it can be sustained over time regardless of changes in staff
- Students should have access to all restrooms that correspond to their gender identity. Providing gender neutral bathroom is an option.
- Working with staff and students to make sure that names and pronouns aligned with a student’s gender identity are used consistently
- Supporting a club or a group that provides a platform for gender and sexual minorities to share their concerns and issues

Inclusion of Transgenders in Educational Institutions

- Developing inclusive curriculum that includes positive images of individuals from gender and sexual minorities, gives voice to students' experiences and challenges structures of heteronormativity
- Identifying themselves as supporters and allies of gender and sexual minorities
- Maintaining confidentiality about a student's gender identity or sexual orientation
- Revisiting the school/ college dress code to ensure that it is flexible enough to allow a student to dress appropriately and in accordance with their gender identity.

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