

Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth with Disabilities

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National LGBTQ Institute on Intimate Partner Violence

A PROJECT OF THE LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER

In partnership with the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and In Our Own Voices, Inc.

We are on Tongva and Chumash land.

→ Colonization affects us all.

→ Visit native-land.ca

A Special Thank You

→ Thank you to the people and organizations listed here for their content, knowledge, and contributions to this presentation.

- **Mary Case** from the Los Angeles LGBT Center's Legal Advocacy Project for Survivors (LAPS)
- **Susan Holt** from the Los Angeles LGBT Center's STOP Violence Program
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
- In Our Own Voices
- The LGBTQ Center Long Beach
- Network La Red
- Waymakers
- Legal Aid Association of California

Community Agreements

→ Confidentiality

→ We're all teachers and learners

→ Take space, make space

→ What else?

→ Own your impact

Agenda

- Introduction
 - Housekeeping and warm-up activities

- SOGIE 101
 - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression

- The Intersection of LGBTQ+ Youth with Disabilities

- Sexual Health and Relationships for LGBTQ+ Youth with Disabilities

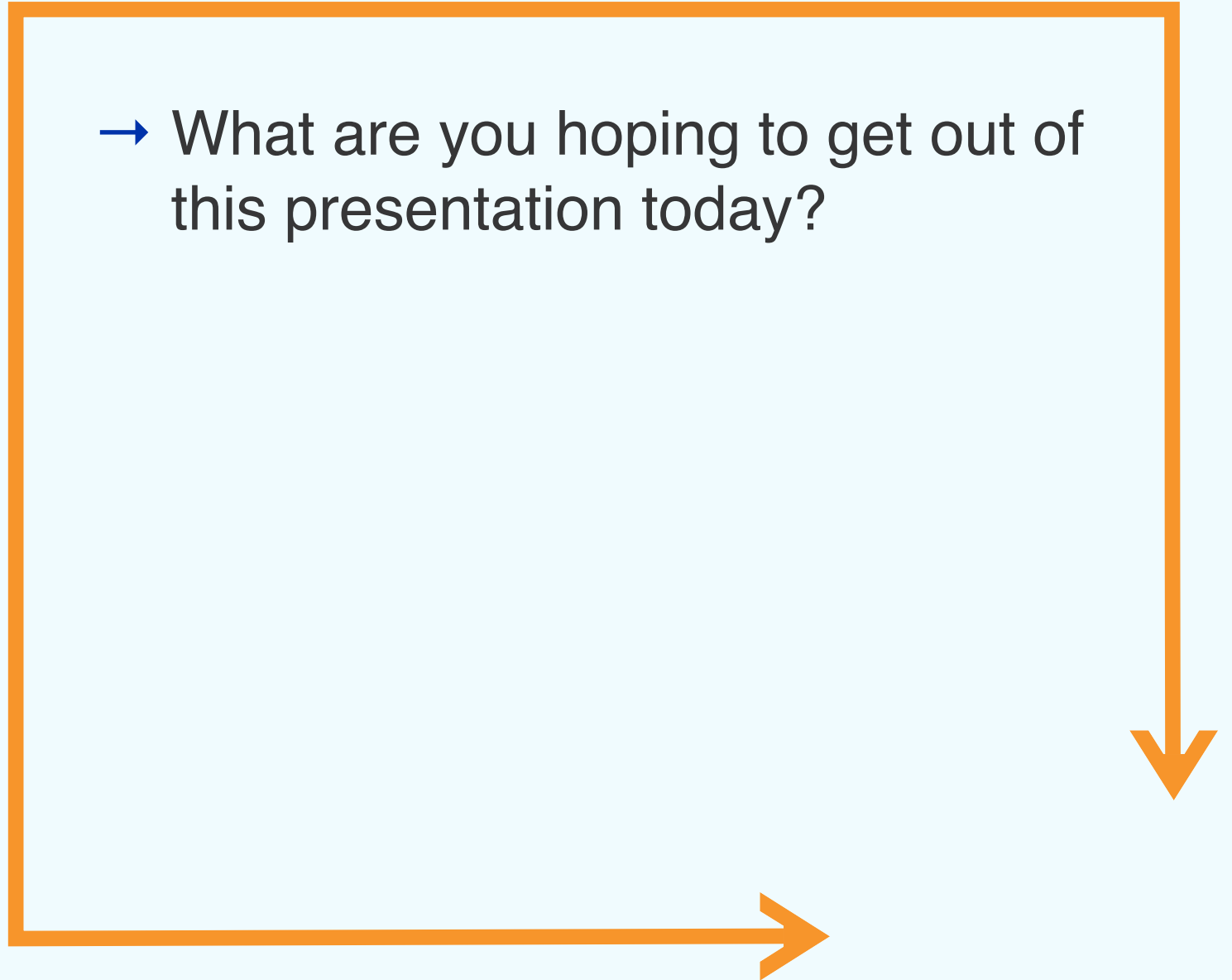
Content Warning

Homo/ bi/ transphobia, teen dating violence, stalking, ableism

Please take care of yourself as needed. Snacking, stretching, and breaks are encouraged!

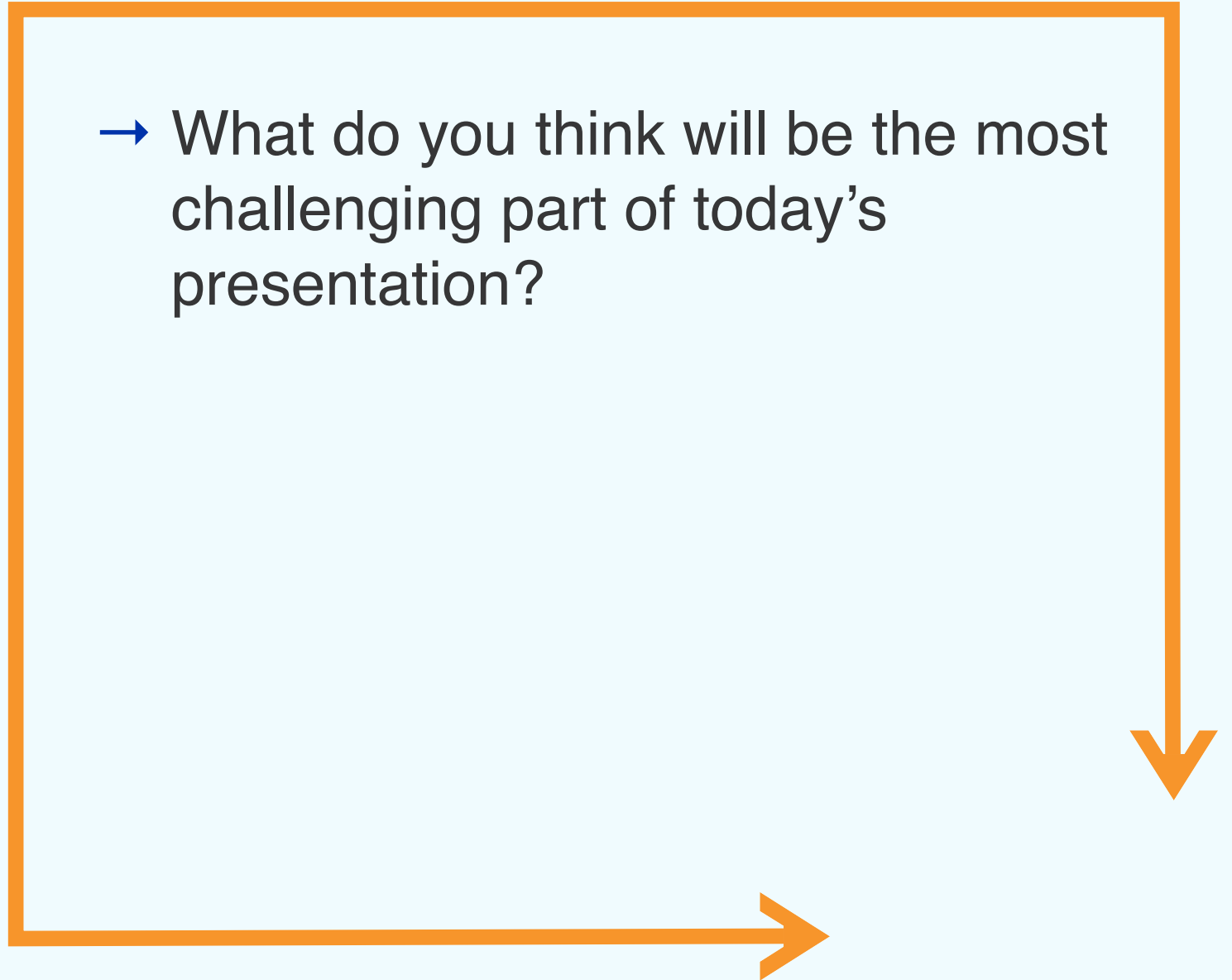
Warm-Up Question #1

→ What are you hoping to get out of this presentation today?



Warm-Up Question #2

→ What do you think will be the most challenging part of today's presentation?

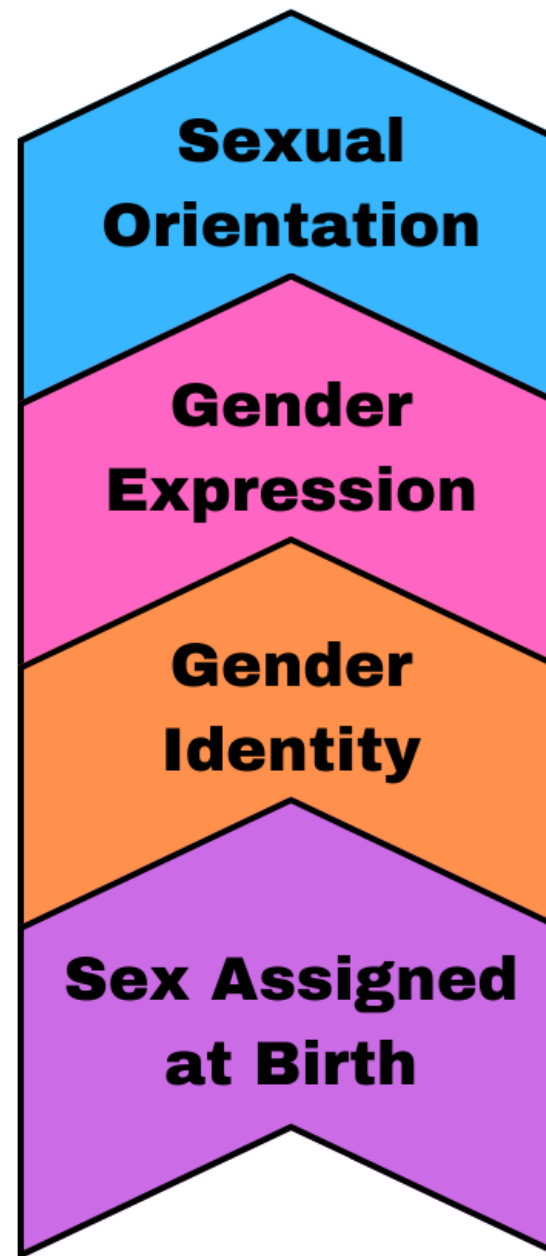


SOGIE 101

→ Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression

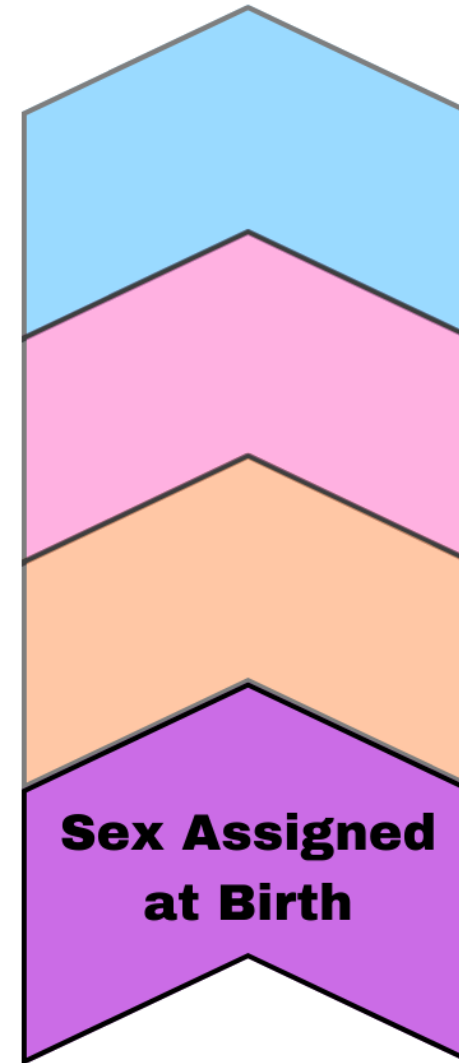


SOGIE Development



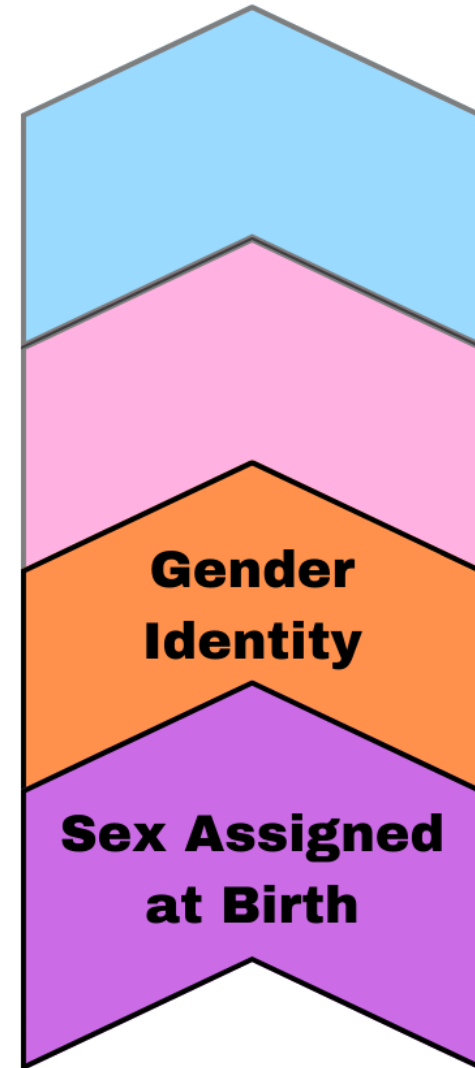
Sex Assigned at Birth

- Often based on the appearance of genitals.
- Terms include:
 - Intersex
 - Includes many variations
 - Female
 - Male



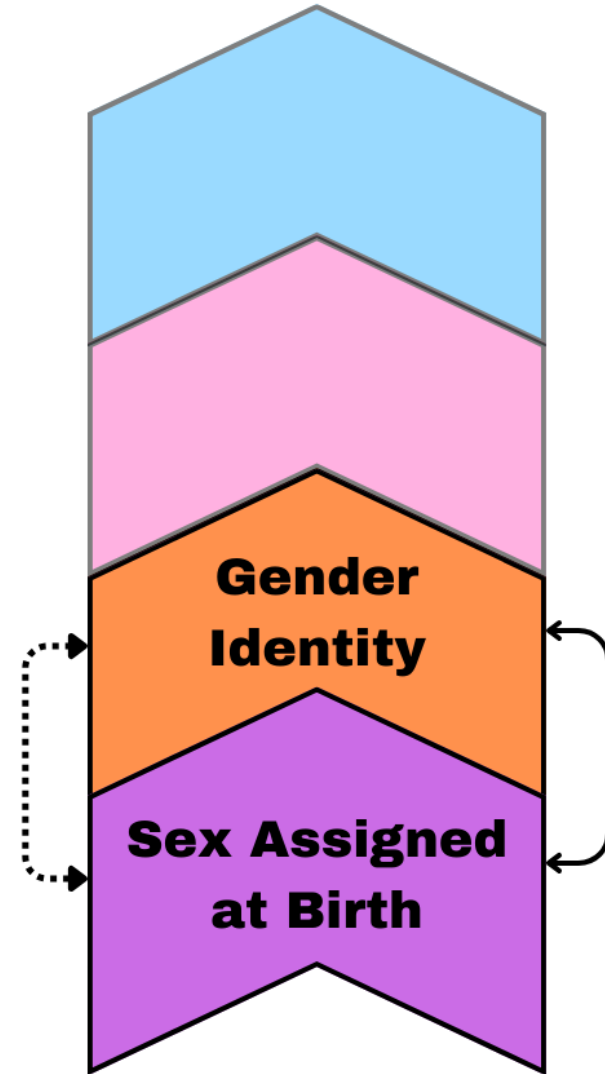
Gender Identity

- Self-determined based on internal sense of self.
- Begins to develop at 2.5- 6 years old.
- Terms include:
 - Woman
 - Man
 - Nonbinary
 - Genderfluid
 - Genderqueer



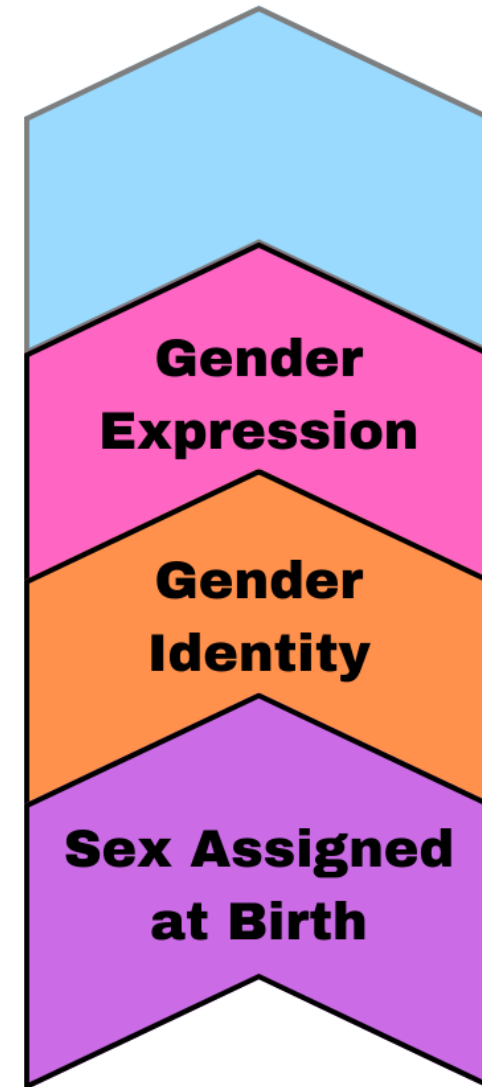
Gender Identity

- Sex assigned at birth and gender identity are distinct but in relationship with each other.
- Terms that describe this relationship are:
 - Cisgender
 - Transgender



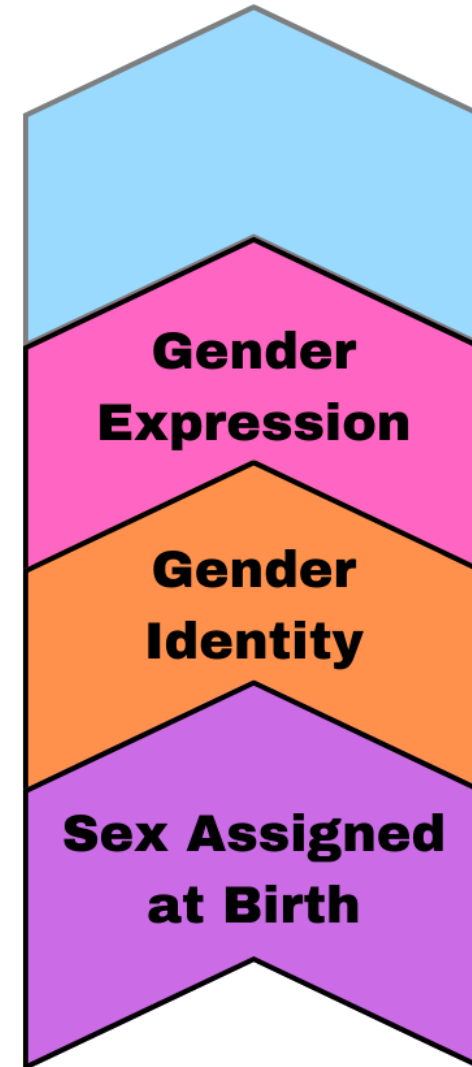
Gender Expression

- How a person expresses their gender outwardly.
- Develops alongside identity at 2.5- 6 years old.



Terms of Address

- Includes name, gendered terms, honorifics, and pronouns.
- **Deadnaming:** Referring to a transgender person with a name they stopped using during their transition.
- Legal names are often required information to collect, however it is best practice to use a transgender youth's asserted name when it is safe to do so.

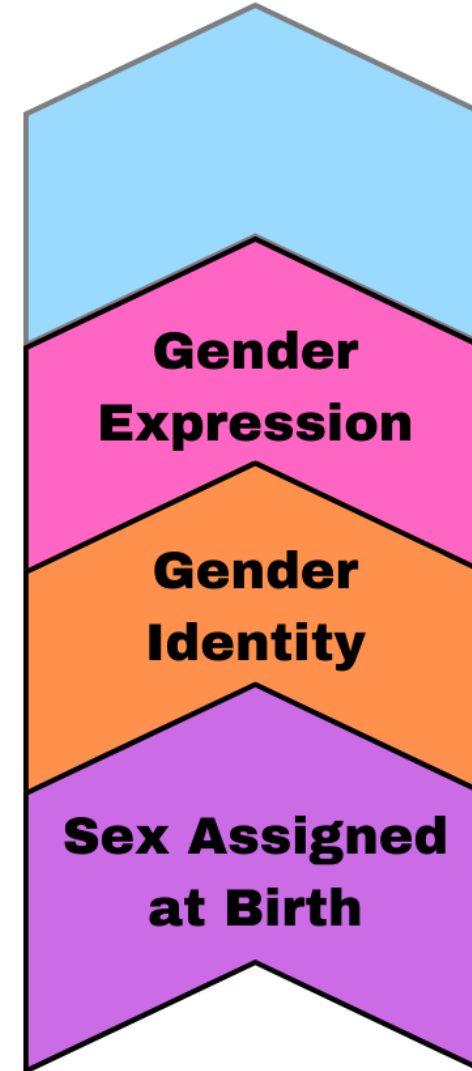


Terms of Address

→ **Misgendering:** Intentionally or unintentionally referring to someone using the incorrect gendered terms, honorifics, and/or pronouns.

→ **What if I misgender someone?**

1. Apologize quickly
2. Correct yourself and move on
3. Practice for accuracy away from the person that you misgendered



Pronouns

→ Common pronoun sets include:

→ She/ her/ hers/ ella

→ He/ him/ his/ él

→ They/ them/ theirs/ elle or ellx

→ Multiple pronouns

→ She/they

→ Any pronouns

→ No pronouns, name only

→ Neopronouns: Gender neutral pronouns.

→ More likely to be used by youth and in online spaces

→ Have existed since 1858

→ Neopronouns include:

→ Ze/ zir/ zirs

→ Xe/ xem/ xyrs

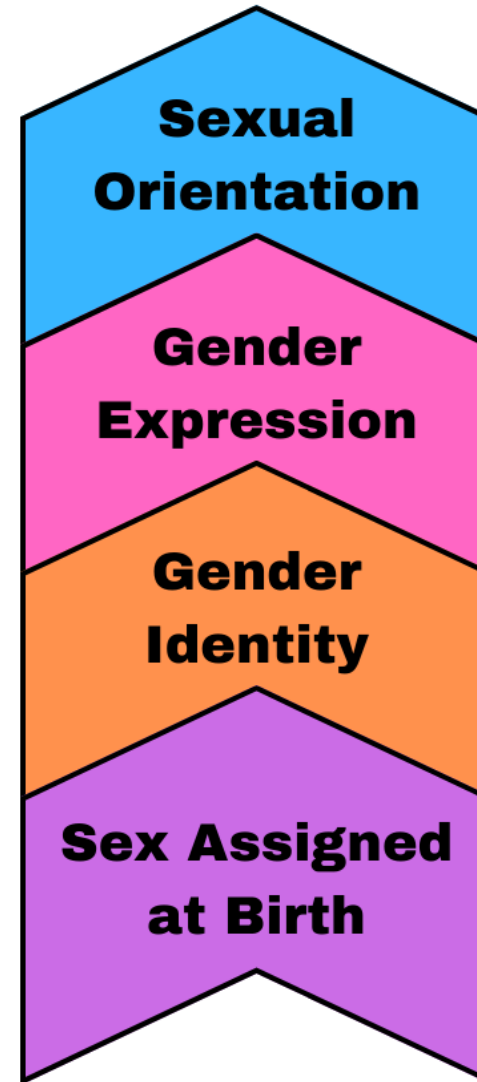
→ Ze/ hir/ hirs

Pronoun Practice

- River, a 20-year-old survivor, is seeking services from your agency. You are meeting River in-person for the first time and want to make sure River feels welcomed and safe.
- How would you determine River's pronouns?

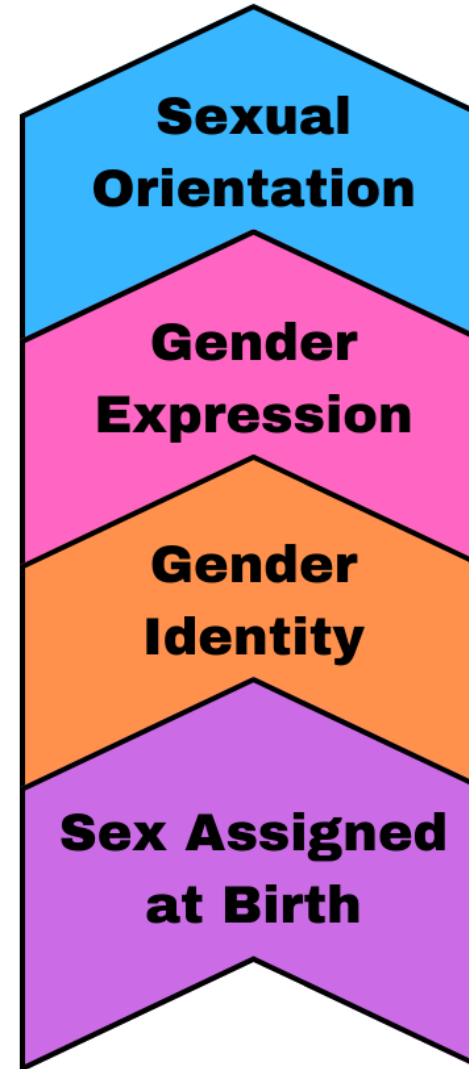
Sexual Orientation

- Self-determined by observing a pattern of attraction over time.
- Terms include:
 - Lesbian
 - Gay
 - Bisexual
 - Queer
 - Pansexual
 - Asexual



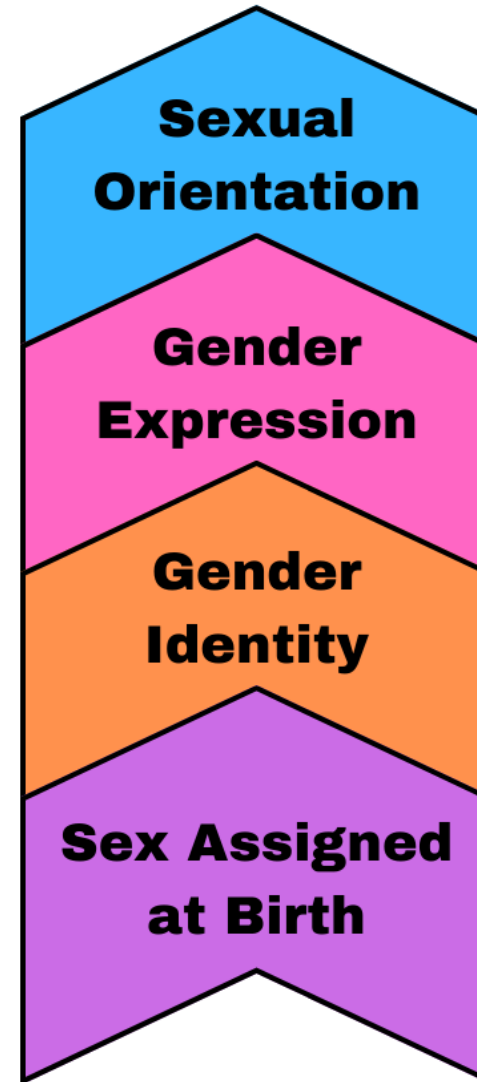
Sexual Orientation

- Generally, begins to develop before puberty- ages 6-12. However, the average age that queer people realize they are not straight is slightly older into adolescence.
- Queer people often report feeling “different” from their peers at this age before developing an awareness of their sexuality.



Questioning

- Questioning one's gender and/or sexuality at any age is normal.
- When working with a youth who is questioning, encourage exploration without steering them in any direction.
- How can we create a safe environment that encourages identity exploration?

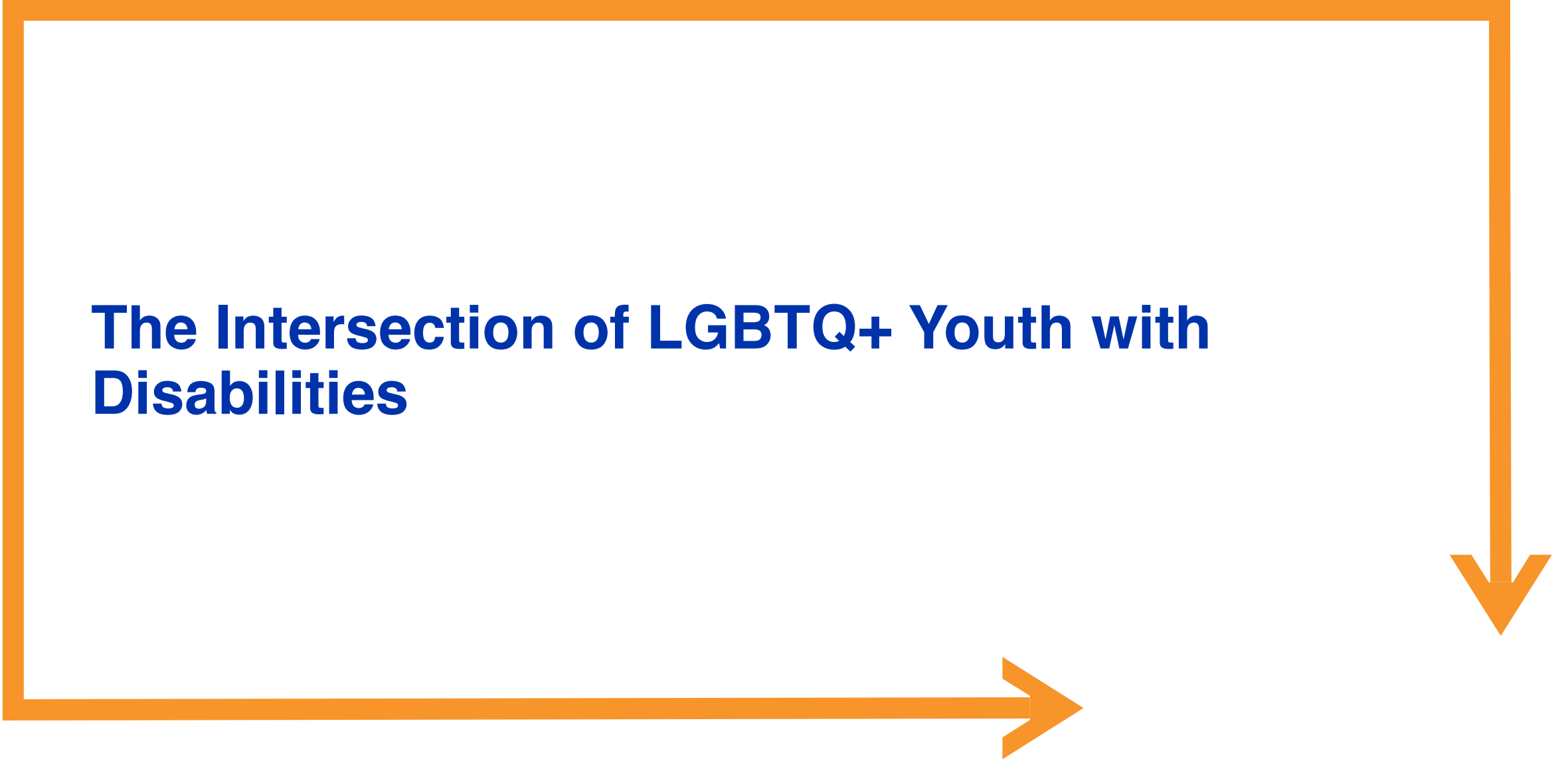


Best Practices

- Let youth self-identify.
 - Resist the urge to do “SOGIE math”.
- Mirror the language the youth uses.
 - Check in around terms you feel uncertain of.

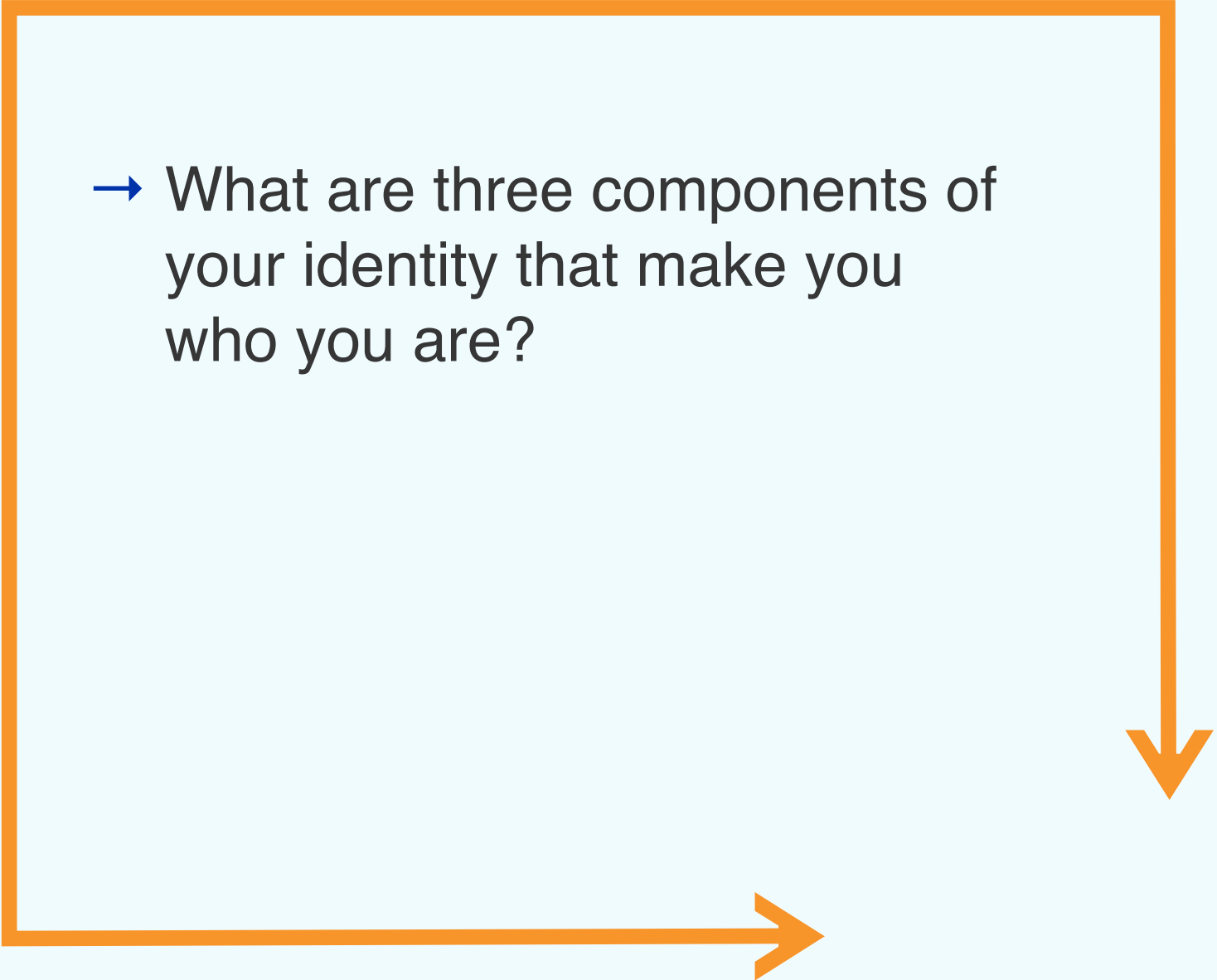
- Default to gender neutral language until you have more information about clients.
- Open-mindedness and respect are more important than memorizing a glossary.

The Intersection of LGBTQ+ Youth with Disabilities



Reflection

→ What are three components of your identity that make you who you are?

A large orange L-shaped arrow graphic is positioned on the right side of the slide. It starts with a horizontal arrow pointing to the right, then turns 90 degrees downward to end in a vertical arrow pointing down.

Intersectionality

→ “Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power [...] interlocks and intersects.

It’s not simply that there’s a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there.”

– Kimberle Crenshaw



Eugenicist Ideology

- People with disabilities and LGBTQ+ folks have been targeted by eugenics, preventing access to information, services, and cultural acceptance around sexuality.

Multiple Marginalization

- LGBTQ+ youth with disabilities experience oppression on multiple fronts.
- According to the Trevor Project, 65% of LGBTQ+ youth with disabilities experience discrimination based on an actual or perceived disability.

Population

- A 2018 Human Rights Campaign Foundation survey found that 1 in 7 LGBTQ+ youth aged 13-17 self-reported having a disability.
- Additional surveys from the Trevor Project found that 5% of LGBTQ+ youth reported being Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and another 5% reported being diagnosed with autism.


Inaccessibility in LGBTQ+ Spaces

- Lack of representation
- Lack of education
- Bars, clubs, and dance halls are common settings for queer events
 - Loud volume, flashing lights, large crowds
- Ableist belief that all people with disabilities are non-sexual

Best Practices



- Remember that LGBTQ+ youth are in all demographics.
- Counter the myths that youth with disabilities do not have a sexuality and would not be seen as potential partners by their peers.

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- Center accessibility when creating spaces for queer and trans youth.
 - Consider noise, lighting, physical space, mobility aid accessibility, COVID exposure and precautions, and more.

Sexual Health and Relationships for LGBTQ+ Youth with Disabilities



Sex Education

- While educational content about sex and relationships exists for all youth, it is not always guaranteed that schools have the funding or the skilled staff able to implement it.
- “Only 60% of states in the U.S. require schools to teach any form of sex education, and the requirements vary wildly from state to state.” –SIECUS, Comprehensive Sex Education for Youth with Disabilities: A Call to Action, 2021

Sex Education 2

- Only about half of special education students reported participating in sex education at school.
- Even less so for youth with disabilities who are Black and/or Latine, from low-income households, and in low-income schools.

Dating Violence

- Youth between the ages of 12-19 with disabilities report experiencing violence including rape or sexual assault twice as much as youth without disabilities.
- Youth who are LGBTQ+ report experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual violence; and cyberstalking at higher rates than their cisgender and heterosexual peers.

Unique Barriers

- Lack of support from family of origin
- Lack of visibility or awareness
- Tight-knit communities
- Pressures to represent community
- Lack of institutional support and resources
- Internalized stigma
- Services do not account for people with disabilities

Relationship Green Flags

- The youth's SOGIE and disability is supported and validated by their partner.
- Their boundaries are respected- including boundaries around time spent together, touch, sex, and being out to others.
- They can communicate through difficulties with their partner without fear.
- They feel comfortable spending time without their partner.
- Their partner supports their goals and helps them achieve them.

Relationship Red Flags

- The youth's partner threatens to out them (SOGIE, HIV status, immigration status, etc.).
- Their partner criticizes their SOGIE, how they express their SOGIE, or their disability.
- Their partner restricts access to gender affirming care, assistive devices.
- Their partner controls money or spending freedom.
- Their partner controls travel and movement.
- Their partner threatens to hurt loved ones.
- Their partner ridicules their body.

Identity Abuse

- The weaponization of one's identity to demean, manipulate, or control.
- Relies on ableist and anti-LGBTQ+ bias and discrimination.

Identity Abuse Examples

- Threatening to out a partner to friends or family.
- Normalizing violence or control based on identity.
- Preventing connection with queer peers or community resources.
- Using false stereotypes against a survivor.
- Leveraging being out longer to maintain control over a partner.
- Saying they will never find another partner.
- Blaming the survivor's SOGIE and/or disability as the “cause” of the assault.


Consider:

- What similarities do you see between identity abuse for LGBTQ+ youth and the forms of abuse youth with disabilities experience?
- What would you add to this list that represents experiences of youth with disabilities?

Best Practices



- Recognize intersecting identities.
- Include LGBTQ+ youth with disabilities in sex education spaces and materials.
- Never assume a youth is out.
- Respect anxieties about coming out a youth may have.

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- Emphasize that youth with disabilities should have bodily autonomy and the importance of enthusiastic consent.
 - Include information about LGBTQ+ youth and youth with disabilities regardless of who is in the room.

Thank You!



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Sources

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