

Supporting LGBTQIA+ participants on outdoor and travel experiences

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This presentation available at
viristar.com/offseas2023

Abbreviations:

- **LGBTQIA+:** lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more
- **2SLGBTQIA+:** two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more

Why is this important?

- People who are LGBTQIA+ face discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence, criminal penalties, just for being who they are
- In some places, discrimination and/or violence is condoned, promoted, or the law



Supporting LGBTQIA+ participants on outdoor and travel experiences

General good practices at any time

- Use person's preferred pronouns & name
 - May not be original name registered at birth
 - May be different from ones used with carers/parents
- Avoid unnecessary gender divisions ('girls on right')
- Intervene with bullying, microaggressions, other misconduct
- Provide inclusive options on forms

General good practices for outdoor/travel experiences

- School should communicate with:
 - Person: what are their needs, what helps them be comfortable. They may be able to guide you
 - For minors: carers/parents (usually only with person's consent)
 - Carers/parents of participating youth (don't ID specific persons)
 - Venue & activity providers
- Communicate with school community about inclusion practices early & often (website, enrollment materials, etc.)
- Make decisions on case-by-case basis



Venues

Issues

- Inclusive sleeping accommodations, toilets, showers, changing areas
- Are staff and others appropriately trained and supportive



Practices:

- Communicate with LGBTQIA+ participants
 - Before, during and after experience
 - What are needs/interests? Let them guide you
 - Advise participants of circumstances in advance
- Communicate with venue—early on
 - Facilities, policies, staff knowledge/skills/values
 - Other groups participants might encounter
 - Bigoted media attention, government authorities, others?

Venues

Practices:

- Provide briefing sheet to venue
 - May have trans* participants
 - Outward appearances may not match gender or gender identity
 - Various pronouns may be used
 - Don't assume gender, gender identity or pronouns
 - Keep this in mind with swimming, toilets, changing rooms, sleeping accommodations
 - Help make the experience supportive, comfortable & positive
 - Contact us with questions

Usually just note may have trans* persons; don't identify specific people



Venues: Gender-Inclusive Sleeping Accommodations



- No one best approach
- Talk to all participants beforehand—what's comfortable?
 - Needs/interests around getting changed, privacy, sleeping arrangements
- Consider views of all carers/parents; communicate with them in advance
- Permitting participants to select housing preference may work well: same-gender, gender-inclusive (mixed), or no-preference
- Segregate by age group (e.g. legal children not with legal adult participants)
- Staff selection based on housing preference, gender identity, gender expression
- Attend to appropriate communication, procedures, supervision

Venues: Gender-Inclusive Sleeping Accommodations

- It may work for trans person to be in a dorm with individuals of their gender
- It may be the trans person shares a communal space with a few close friends, who could be mixed genders
- Single sleeping areas (e.g. one-person tents) may be an option
- Gender-neutral sleeping under tarps or under the stars may work, if privacy while changing, etc. can be maintained
- Open-plan settings often not suitable due to privacy reasons. Private room may work but may not be ideal
- Have backup options if need to make changes—alternative housing options available (e.g. spare rooms, tents)



Venues: Toilets, Showers, Changing Rooms



Gender-neutral toilets

- Ideally 3 types available: single-sex toilets, block of lockable floor-to-ceiling cubicle/stall toilets for everyone, with menstrual product bins, and accessible toilets
- Consider bringing signs to identify gender-neutral toilets
- At venue, or when traveling: staff may enter bathroom & advise as to availability of lockable toilet cubicles/stalls. Consider being present in bathroom near toilet stalls, per safeguarding policies, depending on person's wishes

Shower facilities

- To support privacy, confidentiality of trans status

Clothes-changing areas—goals:

- Trans people access changing room corresponding to gender identity
- Accommodate privacy need—private changing place availability helpful
- Ability to keep trans status confidential



Media

- In rare cases, prepare for interest from transphobic newsmedia
- Be prepared with media statements that include references to work to promote inclusion and equity, provide a place safe from bullying where everyone feels valued.
- Protect confidentiality of individuals



A group of parents of students at Weaver Elementary School in Los Alamitos are upset with the Los Alamitos Unified School District after learning about the sleeping arrangements at a school-organized science camp in San Bernardino County.

"No parent should feel the way I feel after knowing what could have happened to my daughter," said parent Suzy Johnson.

The parents say their fifth-grade girls told them some of the biologically male counselors at Camp Pali in San Bernardino who use they/them pronouns spent three nights sleeping in cabins with the young girls.

Central Oregon school district pulls students from camp minutes after learning of nonbinary counselors



By **Joni Auden Land** (OPB)
Oct. 24, 2022 4:18 p.m.

The camp's director said misinformation about his counselors and transphobia led to the Culver School District pulling its students

Outdoor School is a rite of passage for many Oregon students, when pre-teen students across the state spend multiple days in the wilderness learning about the outdoors.

The sixth grade students of Culver Schools, a small district in rural Central Oregon, were scheduled for a three-day, two-night stay at Camp Tamarack in nearby Sisters starting Oct. 17. It didn't go according to plan.

Several hours into the trip, the school bus returned, loaded up all the students and their belongings, and took them back to Culver. The reason: District officials learned nonbinary counselors would be sharing cabins with the students, according to letters sent to parents later that day.



If You Are A Venue



Overview of Gender-Inclusive Practices

Nature Camp seeks to foster a deep and abiding connection with the natural world, to instill a commitment to wise stewardship of the Earth and its natural resources, and to inspire a lifelong love of learning—for all of our participants, regardless of race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression. Throughout our nearly 80-year history, including 70 years at our current location in the Big Mary's Creek valley of Rockbridge County, Nature Camp has housed campers primarily in two large bunkhouses, designated simply the Girls' Bunkhouse (GBH, comprising Shenandoah and Southwest, separated by a central hall) and the Boys' Bunkhouse (BBH, comprising Tidewater and Piedmont, also with a hall in between). For the past four or more decades, the wing of the Staff House (or office building) has also been used as a de facto annex to the GBH, with accommodations of up to an additional 10 girls.

While this strictly binary housing arrangement has generally been satisfactory, it is no longer an adequate model, nor does it reflect or conform to the diversity of the camper population we now serve. While binary options may be sufficient for the majority of participants, a non-trivial

- Communicate early to potential site users
- Explain inclusive procedures
- Explain why this is appropriate



Activities

- **Transition time:** trans young people may take more time to get ready in morning or after activities, e.g. to adjust binders or other clothing or prosthetics, apply makeup in order to be seen by the world as who they are. Provide time; help them manage their time; avoid rushing them.
- **Gear:** Support arrangements for cleaning, managing gender-affirming undergarments & prosthetics
- **Harnesses:** Put on harnesses at the activity site immediately before activity, not in more public area. Make it ok to remove harnesses as soon as done with activity. Consent before checking harnesses/helmets by touch or attaching carabiners; person can fit-check or attach carabiners themselves.
- **Facilitators:** Inform facilitators there is a trans person, ask to be conscious regarding pronouns and assumptions. May not need to identify specific person.
- **Swimwear:** what trans person is comfortable wearing, e.g. t-shirt, baggier swim shorts. Talk with provider about expectations. Person may bring extra dry chest binder & provide opportunity to change.
- **Gendered spaces/activities:** don't enable gender stereotypes in sports or games. Use chore wheel/rota so girls carry luggage & campfire, boys cook and clean



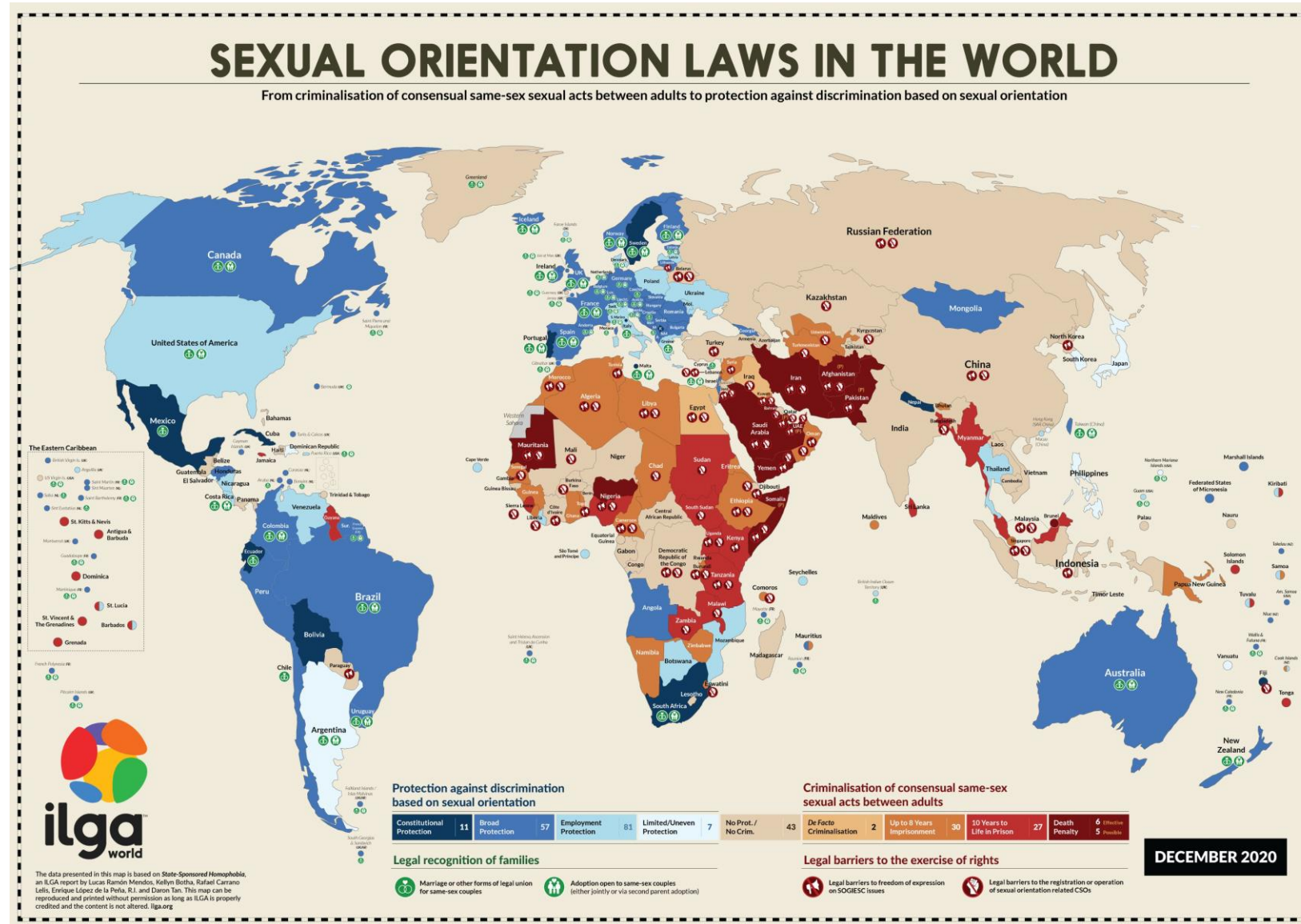
Medical Emergencies

- Discuss with young person their wishes
- Advise emergency personnel of person's gender identity, pronouns, any clothing elements like chest binder. Consider appropriate privacy, staff presence, support during medical care.
- In some countries, trans people may be refused treatment, or treated in a gender-non-conforming space
- Discuss with person & carers/guardians/parents; make a plan in advance



Travel: Issues

- Person does not appear to match gender listed on identification
 - May lead to questioning, delays
- Passport indicates non-binary gender, a category not recognized in country of transit or being visited
- Transphobic bathroom laws in states in USA—can't use bathroom of one's gender
- Locations where illegal to be openly LGBTQIA+, criminal penalties for being openly LGBTQIA+ are in force, or authorities condone violence against LGBTQIA+ persons
- Border crossings, search procedures
 - Clothing items like binders or prosthetics, can trigger search when passing through scanners



Travel: Response



- Do LGBTQIA+-based risk assessment of transit locations (stopovers) & destination before travel: ilga.org, foreign office
- As possible, have gender listed on passport & other ID match gender associated with appearance of person
- Bring additional IDs, e.g. birth certificate
- Ensure ticket and passport names are same
- For body searches/pat-downs
 - Discuss with person, and carers/parents in advance
 - Consider having staff go through scanner immediately before person, so available to support, talk with security personnel
- Evacuation may (rarely) be needed from country. Consider staffing; communications with other participants, and evacuee's carers/family members
 - Consider physical/emotional safety of person
 - Develop a plan in advance

Resources for Further Information

viristar.com/offseas2023

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

ilga.org/

gendered intelligence

genderedintelligence.co.uk

Transplaining

transplaining.info

Outdoor Safety & DEI, Psychological Risk Management

bit.ly/equity-prm

An intro to queer inclusivity in the outdoors

viristar.com/post/an-intro-to-queer-inclusivity-in-the-outdoors

Pronouns

viristar.com/post/pronouns

Gender-inclusive housing sample info

naturecamp.net/gender-inclusive-housing

