Imagining Transgender ‘Inclusion’ in Libraries

WLA Conference, November 2017

Sunny Kim
Seattle Public Library
Teen Services Librarian
Pronouns: they/them/their

Micah Kehrein
Seattle Public Library
Library Associate II
Pronouns: they/them/their

Reed Garber-Pearson
University of Washington
Integrated Social Sciences Librarian
Pronouns: they/them/their

Bean Yogi
Seattle Public Library
Library Associate I
Pronouns: they/them/their
Agenda

★ Icebreaker and introductions
★ Terminology
★ Gender Unicorn
★ De-mystifying Trans & Non-Binary Identities
★ Intersectionality
★ How this impacts our work
★ Small Groups
   ☆ Scenarios: Identifying Barriers
   ☆ Library Policy Analysis & Audit
   ☆ Problems & Solutions
★ Case Studies
★ Making Change in Libraries
★ Q&A
Goals

★ Gain knowledge about our transgender, queer, and gender non-conforming patrons and coworkers and ideal best practices for creating welcoming environments.

★ Learn skills to help create safer spaces for transgender, queer, and gender non-conforming patrons through language, programming, and de-escalation techniques.

★ Practice evaluating existing library policies for their level of transgender inclusion and think about how to enact structural changes for inclusion.

★ Take away actionable skills.
Ground Rules

★ Respect each other
★ Speak from your own experience, share your own story
★ One Mic-- listen when someone else is talking
★ Respect pronouns
Who is in the room?

1. Pair-Share
   ★ Name
   ★ Pronoun
   ★ Why are you here today and what do you hope to gain?

2. Group Introductions
   ★ Name
   ★ Pronoun
   ★ One word on how you’re feeling about this session
Terminology

- Language changes over time
- Who you are AND who you love
- Gender: a social construct and a false binary
Matching Game Answers: Part 1

Asexual - *Someone who does not experience sexual attraction.*

Cisgender - *A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender.*

Gender non-conforming - *Denoting or relating to a person whose behavior or appearance does not conform to prevailing cultural and social expectations about what is appropriate to their gender.*

Intersex - *General term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.*

Non-binary/Genderqueer - *Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. They may also identify as both man and woman simultaneously.*
Matching Game Answers: Part 2

Transgender - An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transgender man (or trans man) – Person who was assigned female at birth, but his gender identity is that of man. He lives as a man.

Transgender woman (or trans woman) – Person who was assigned male a birth, but her gender identity is that of a woman. She lives as a woman.

Transition - For many people, this is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. It can include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one's family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and pronouns; dressing differently; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and sometimes surgery.
The Gender Unicorn

Gender Identity
- Female/Woman/Girl
- Male/Man/Boy
- Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression
- Feminine
- Masculine
- Other

Sex Assigned at Birth
- Female
- Male
- Other/Intersex

Physically Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted to
- Women
- Men
- Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Demystifying Transgender Identities

★ Many transgender folks transition socially and/or medically.
   ☆ Name and/or pronoun change
   ☆ Change in presentation
   ☆ Hormone Therapy
   ☆ Gender Confirming Surgeries

★ “Born in the wrong body” is a narrative that isn’t true for every transgender person.

★ Being transgender isn’t a mental illness.
intersectionality

“If you're standing in the path of multiple forms of exclusion, you're likely to get hit by both.”

- Kimberle Crenshaw, legal scholar
Police Harassment and Assault, Due to Bias, by Race

From “Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey” by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011.

“Free Ky Peterson” by Micah Bizant from the “Trans Life and Liberation Art Series”
How does this impact your work?
Impacts

★ Making libraries safe for all of our patrons

★ Avoid unintentionally escalating situations by knowing how to approach transgender folks

★ Avoid misgendering patrons

★ Awareness of the barriers patrons face will help you to advocate and make institutional changes.

★ Don’t forget about the impact on your transgender coworkers!
Break!
Please come back by 10am
Best Practices

★ Don’t assume gender! Until someone tells us, we don’t know their gender. Learn to use gender neutral language when referring to all new people.

★ Ask for pronouns and share your own.

★ If someone tells you their pronouns, use them—even if they aren’t around to hear them.

★ Similarly, if someone tells you their gender, use that gender if you refer to them later!

★ **Transgender** or **Trans** are the most inclusive words to use and are always followed by nouns like person, man, woman, people, folks, etc.

☆ Transgendered is not a word.
Mistakes Happen! How to Apologize:

★ Apologize briefly, but genuinely.

★ Don’t make it about you.

★ Move on!

★ Don’t dig yourself deeper by making assumptions about the person.

★ Learn from your mistakes and use the correct pronouns in the future!
# Gender Neutral Language Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addressing groups:</th>
<th>Referring to groups:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>Folks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folks</td>
<td>Patrons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You all</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addressing individuals:</th>
<th>Referring to individuals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello there</td>
<td>This patron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse Me</td>
<td>They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The patron in the green sweater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addressing children:</th>
<th>Referring to children:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hi Friend</td>
<td>Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library Buddy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing to/about groups:**
Do not use gendered language.

**Writing to/about individuals:**
Simply use people’s names. Avoid gendered honorifics unless someone has told you what honorifics they prefer.
Working Groups

Groups:

1. KCLS
2. Pierce, Timberland, PNLA
3. Port Townsend, Neill, Whatcom, Bremerton, Sno-Isle, Skagit

In your groups:

★ Introduce yourselves (name, institution, position, pronouns)

★ Share an anecdote or interaction that you wish you would have handled differently
Scenarios

What barriers exist in these processes at your library?

1. A young person wants to change their name on their library account.
3. A finalist for an open position asks about what the library offers in terms of transgender affirming healthcare.

1. A patron expresses concern over using a gendered restroom.
3. A patron complains of a woman in the men’s restroom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>What does your library look like?</th>
<th>Challenges in access for trans folks?</th>
<th>Opportunities for change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Do nondiscrimination policies include gender identity & expression?  
- Specifics of harassment and disruptions policies?  
- What are procedures for patron name change? For youth?  
- What information is required to obtain a library card? | | | |
| Facilities | - Are there gender inclusive bathrooms? How are they marked and where are they located? How would a patron find these facilities? Who has access to them? | | |
| Programs, Services & Collections | - Does public programming make visible trans identities? How?  
- In what ways do public services explicitly acknowledge trans folks?  
- Do collections represent trans histories & experiences? How would patrons find these? Where are collections located? How visible are they? Are there any folks whose jobs it is to make sure trans experiences are collected? | | |
| Internal Procedures & Records | - Does insurance contract explicitly affirm transgender services? How much of services does it cover?  
- Does onboarding for employees include preferred name & pronouns?  
- Are there opportunities for professional development and training?  
- Has the library collected any qualitative or quantitative data about trans folks in the library? | | |

Policy Analysis
### Institutional Assessment Worksheet

Reimagining Transgender ‘Inclusion’ for Libraries, WLA 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Your Library</th>
<th>Challenges for transgender folks</th>
<th>Possibilities for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-What do nondiscrimination policies include?</td>
<td>-Nondiscrim, non-retaliation and harassment policies include &quot;gender identity or expression&quot;</td>
<td>-Having 911 called on you, inappropriately demanding attention of others</td>
<td>-Train chat librarians to not automatically use name listed in chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-What do the harassment and disruptions policies include?</td>
<td>-Disruptions protocol “Call 911&quot; -Disruptions include anything violating Code of Conduct -Husky Card issued to all UW students, faculty, staff</td>
<td>-Preferred name doesn't show up in chat reference session</td>
<td>-Train library staff on gender neutral lang to avoid upsetting patrons (talk to diversity committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-What information is required to obtain a library card?</td>
<td>-Name Change: need court order or demonstrate usage -Preferred Name option, feeds into library account</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-What are procedures for adult and youth patron name change?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Challenges for transgender folks</th>
<th>Possibilities for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Where are restrooms, how are they marked, and who has access to them?</td>
<td>One all gender accessible restroom on ground floor, small signage on other floors</td>
<td>Larger signage outside bathrooms on all floors (talk to signage committee) More all gender restrooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs &amp; Services</th>
<th>Challenges for transgender folks</th>
<th>Possibilities for change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-How have public services and programs explicitly acknowledged intersectional trans identities?</td>
<td>-Some library staff have taken Safe(r) Zone training</td>
<td>-Connect with Q Center, have a library (share resources?) Libraries visible presence at Queer Student Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-No formal relationship with Q Center -Only some offices have Safe(r) Zone stamps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some library staff have taken Safe(r) Zone training

Larger signage outside bathrooms on all floors

How would patrons know it exists?

-Train chat librarians to not automatically use name listed in chat

-Train library staff on gender neutral lang to avoid upsetting patrons (talk to diversity committee)

Connect with Q Center, have a library (share resources?) Libraries visible presence at Queer Student Events
Group Presentations
Break!
Please come back by 11:35am
Making Change
Case Studies

★ The Seattle Public Library
★ Louisville Free Public Libraries
★ University of Washington Libraries
Make Change

★ Center the people most impacted
★ Identify root causes
★ Build collective power
  ○ Unions
  ○ Wider community
★ Apply strategic pressure
★ Be persistent & creative

“We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest” by Monica Trinidad
Q&A

Recommended Readings & Resources:
https://tinyurl.com/WLA-TransResources
Closing: What will you take home with you today?