



# LGBTQ+ 101

## Facilitator Handbook 2018

## **Introduction**

### What is the purpose of this workshop?

The LGBTQ+ 101 workshops are designed to provide a space for students to learn about and discuss issues affecting LGBTQ+ people, including prejudice, microaggressions, erasure, coming out and being an ally. The workshop should also ensure that all Oxford students have a basic understanding of terms and concepts that concern LGBTQ+ people. The workshop is not intended as a lecture, or as an attempt to eradicate all anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes throughout the university, but simply to facilitate a discussion around preventing anti-LGBTQ+ attitudes and supporting LGBTQ+ students.

### What should participants take away from the workshop?

In its simplest form, this workshop should encourage students to treat LGBTQ+ people with openness, empathy and respect that goes beyond mere 'tolerance'. Participants should feel that they have had an opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions, and that their opinions and experiences have been taken seriously. Participants should leave with a better understanding of how they can support LGBTQ people through speaking out against LGBTQ+ discrimination, acknowledging their privilege and questioning their own prejudices.

## **The Workshop**

You're encouraged to spend about 20-30 minutes going through the presentation, and another 20 minutes or so looking at the scenarios. You may need to work around this depending on your college's time constraints, but overall the workshop is intended to take about 45 minutes.

The structure of the workshop is:

- Definitions of LGBTQ+
- Gender
- Attraction
- Coming Out
- Discrimination
- Privilege
- Allyship
- LGBTQ+ spaces in Oxford
- Scenarios

## 1. Introduction:

- *Introduce yourself using your pronouns.*
- *Briefly explain why the workshop is taking place, i.e. to discuss issues of LGBTQ+phobia and help students to support each other in college and throughout the university.*
- *Explain that the workshop is not a debate about the rights or existence of any group within the LGBTQ+ community.*
- *Emphasise that participants are free to leave at any time (if possible, provide a nearby room where participants can go if they feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable).*

## 2. Definitions of LGBTQ+

- *Ask participants to match up the terms and definitions on their handout.*
  - *After a few minutes, go through the terms one by one. You could read out each definition and ask participants to call out which term they matched it with, and then go through the actual definition.*
1. Lesbian - describes a woman-aligned person who is exclusively attracted to women-aligned people.
  2. Gay - describes someone attracted to people of the same gender as themselves.
  3. Bisexual/biromantic - describes someone attracted to more than one gender.
  4. Transgender - describes a person whose gender is not the same as that which they were assigned at birth.
  5. Queer - an umbrella term reclaimed by some members of the LGBTQ+ community (often still considered a slur).
  6. Questioning - the process of exploring your own orientation and/or gender identity.
  7. Intersex - describes a person who is born with a sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male.
  8. Pansexual/panromantic - describes a person whose attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.
  9. Asexual - describes someone who doesn't experience sexual attraction.
  10. Aromantic - describes someone who doesn't experience romantic attraction.
  11. Non-binary - describes someone whose gender does not fit the male/female binary, and may be both or neither.
  12. Demisexual/demiromantic - describes someone who doesn't experience sexual/romantic attraction until they have formed a close emotional connection.

### **3. Gender**

#### **What is gender?**

- Gender is a personal sense of one's identity, with mental, social, and biological characteristics.
- It doesn't necessarily align with someone's sex, which is a physical characteristic assigned at birth based on your reproductive characteristics, hormones, and chromosomes - in other words, your body.
- Someone whose gender is different from their sex is called transgender, or trans.
- Someone whose gender is the same as their sex is called cisgender, or cis.
- Gender isn't a binary, and every gender is valid! You may not have heard of some terms before, but that doesn't mean they aren't real.

#### **Being transgender**

- Many trans people change their name and pronouns to better align with their gender.
- Some trans people undergo medical transitioning, such as taking hormones or having surgery, to feel more comfortable in their body.
- Being trans can come with a lot of daily difficulties and anxieties, such as fear of being 'outed' or encountering discrimination when trying to use the bathroom.
- Having supportive friends can make a massive difference.

#### **Pronouns**

- Pronouns are very important for trans people.
- They are not limited to he/him and she/her.
- They/them is a common pronoun used by many non-binary people.
- If someone tells you they want to start using different pronouns, make an effort to respect that!
- Calling someone by the wrong pronouns is called misgendering, and can be upsetting for trans people.
- If you don't know someone's pronouns, don't just assume, but ask! A good way to phrase this is, "What pronouns do you use?" That's much better than being asked "Are you a boy or a girl?"

#### **Respecting people's gender**

- Don't assume someone's gender based on how they look.
- If someone tells you that they are trans, respect that they've disclosed personal information to you.

- Don't tell other people that someone is trans without their permission.
- Use the pronouns they ask you to use for them, and introduce yourself with your own pronouns.
- If you're not sure about something, ask! Asking is far less offensive than assuming.

#### 4. Attraction

- *Explain that people experience attraction in different ways and that while we're about to distinguish between sexual and romantic attraction, for some people the two aren't separate.*

##### **What is sexual orientation?**

- While gender is about who you are, sexual orientation is about which gender(s), if any, you are sexually attracted to.
- It is not a choice or a lifestyle.
- It's not a phase, but can be subject to change.
- Some people go through a period of questioning.
- Some people do not want to choose a specific label to describe their sexual orientation at all.
- Not everyone experiences sexual attraction.

##### **What is romantic orientation?**

- Indicates which gender(s), if any, you are attracted to romantically.
- It may align with sexual orientation, but for some people it's separate.
- Like sexual orientation, this can be fluid and can be something people question over time.
- Some people may not experience romantic attraction at all.

#### 5. Coming out

- *Briefly discuss why it is useful to think about what coming out means, e.g. many people come out at university; negative reactions can be extremely hurtful.*
- Coming out is the process in which an individual discloses that they are LGBTQ+.
- It should be a choice - never force someone to come out.
- It's not gossip! Don't disclose someone's sexuality or gender to other people without their permission.

- If someone comes out to you, acknowledge that you've been entrusted with personal information.
- Recognise that they haven't changed - all that's changed is your knowledge about them.
- Be careful about tagging people in LGBTQ+ posts on social media. Lots of people have their family on Facebook and won't be out to them, and may not be out to all their friends, so get their permission before tagging them in any LGBTQ+ memes or photos at LGBTQ+ events.

## **6. Prejudice & Discrimination**

- *Make sure to provide trigger warnings.*
- *Examples: Trigger warnings include: suicide, hate crime, violence, harassment.*
- *Don't read out the statistics on these slides, but let participants read them themselves for a few minutes.*
- *Tell participants they are free to look away from the next two slides if they might find them upsetting.*

### **In the UK....**

- One in five LGBTQ+ people have experienced a hate crime or incident due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the last 12 months.
- More than a third of LGBTQ+ people say they don't feel comfortable walking down the street while holding their partner's hand. This increases to 58% of gay men.
- LGB people demonstrate more suicidal behaviour, mental disorders, and increased substance misuse and substance dependence than heterosexual people.
- A third of LGBTQ+ students (33%) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from other students in the last year because they are LGBTQ+.

### **At the University of Oxford...**

- More than 60% of transgender students have experienced transphobia at the University of Oxford.
- 98% of transgender students have experienced a mental health issue whilst at Oxford.
- Non-LGBTQ+ students were 1.5 times more likely than LGBTQ+ students to report feeling welcome most or all of the time at Oxford.
- LGBTQ+ undergraduates were twice as likely to state they felt lonely/isolated most or all of the time compared to non LGBTQ+ undergraduates.

## 7. Privilege

### Heteronormativity, Cisnormativity & Microaggressions

- **Heteronormativity:** The assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that being anything other than straight is a deviance from the norm.
- **Cisnormativity:** The assumption that everyone is cisgender, and that being transgender is abnormal and inferior.
  - *Explain that the term cisgender refers to an individual who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.*
- **Microaggressions:** Everyday comments, whether intentional or not, which further marginalise people of minority identities.

### Privilege

- The absence of oppression due to social and institutional structures which favour certain characteristics or identities.
- It is not the same as saying that you've had an easy life free of problems.
- Being cisgender or straight means you don't face certain kinds of discrimination simply because you are not LGBTQ+. It doesn't mean you've had an easy life.
- Even if you experience oppression as an LGBTQ+ person, it doesn't mean you understand all forms of oppression.
- Having privilege isn't something you need to feel guilty about, but it's good to be aware of it.

## 8. Allyship

- *Ask participants what they think it means to be an ally to LGBTQ+ people.*

### What does it mean to be an ally?

- An ally is someone who supports LGBTQ+ people and the LGBTQ+ community, but isn't necessarily LGBTQ+ themselves.
- Being an ally is an active practice which requires learning and listening.
- "Ally" is not an identity that can be claimed which automatically implies you cannot partake in actions that oppress and discriminate against certain marginalised groups.

### How can you be a better ally?

- **Listen.** As an ally, you will not experience the type of oppression and discrimination that the people in the marginalised group you want to support have, and therefore you must constantly listen and be open to their ideas and opinions.

- **Acknowledge your privilege.** As recipients of certain privileges you must recognise that you are capable of perpetuating systems of oppression from which your privilege came.
- **Educate yourself.** Do research about the oppression the people you seek to work with face. See how you can avoid making them feel excluded and instead make them feel considered, such as being aware of the language you use and respecting everyone's identity.
- **Be kind.** Treat others as you'd wish to be treated yourself.
- Be **conscious** not to overshadow LGBTQ+ voices. Speak up for LGBTQ+ people, but don't speak over them.

### **What does it mean to call someone out?**

- Calling someone out is holding them accountable for what they say and do and its impact on other people.
- Calling people out is a part of being an ally. It challenges systems of oppression in everyday life and makes the people around you recognise their own biases.
- If it is safe to do so, calling people out is important!
- Or you could:
  - Refuse to laugh along
  - Support those who speak up
  - Speak to people after the situation

### **What do I do if I get called out?**

- Do:
  - Listen. Treat being called out as an opportunity to learn how to be a better ally to LGBTQ+ people.
  - Accept that you might have offended someone and that it isn't appropriate to challenge it.
  - Understand that it's not a personal attack.
  - Avoid making it a big deal or being overly apologetic.
  - Recognise that your intent is irrelevant.

## **9. LGBTQ+ Spaces in Oxford**

- LGBTQ+ spaces give LGBTQ+ people a safe space to explore their identities and meet other people from the community.
- They're open to people who are questioning, and allies invited by LGBTQ+ friends.
- If you're a cis straight person in an LGBTQ+ space, be respectful that it is first and foremost a LGBTQ+ space.

- LGBTQ+ Society – for socials specific to your own community (e.g. bi/pan pizza, ace tea, trans welfare) and Tuesday drinks before Plush (Oxford's LGBTQ+ club). LGBTQ+ Society is the biggest student-led society in Oxford after the Student Union, with over 200 people attending weekly Tuesday Drinks and very active identity-specific groups.
  - Oxford SU LGBTQ+ Campaign – LGBTQ+ activism, raising awareness and pushing for more support for LGBTQ+ individuals.
  - Rainbow Peers – LGBTQ peer supporter network in the University. If there are rainbow peers at your college, point them out to the freshers.
  - Your college LGBTQ+ rep(s)! Feel free to name your college rep at this point.
  - Queer Week – hosted at Wadham, this is a week of talks, performances and other events.
  - Queerfest – Oxford's biggest student celebration of LGBTQ+ culture after Queer Week.
- *You can point participants towards the OU LGBTQ+ Society's website for lots of identity-specific and general welfare resources which may be helpful for LGBTQ+ people and for allies seeking to learn more or to support their friends.*

## 10. Scenarios

- *Depending on the size of your group and time constraints, you could go through each scenario individually, or allocate each scenario to groups within the room, and ask them to feed back after 5 minutes of discussion.*

**1. You buy a new jacket and when your friend Stephen sees it he says "that's so gay". Stephen uses a homophobic slur casually as an insult. When you point out that this word is homophobic and offensive, he says "my gay friend says it's fine, and anyway, I'm an ally"**

- How would you call out these comments?
- Why is it wrong to use "gay" to mean "rubbish"?
  - Associating someone's identity with something negative can be really hurtful.
  - Can undermine the confidence of LGBTQ+ people, particularly if they are not out.
- What does it mean to reclaim a slur and who gets to reclaim it?

- People belonging to the group a slur has been used against may decide to reclaim it, in order to take back power.
- The way in which a word has been used is important - slurs have been and often still are used to insult and oppress.
- “Ally’ isn’t an identity you can claim to excuse you from homophobic comments.

**2. You are speaking to a friend from your college, Ben, when he brings up Ella, who is asexual. He says “That’s not a real identity, she just needs to meet the right guy.”**

- What assumptions are made here?
  - Assumes heterosexuality (heteronormativity), i.e. that Ella (and most people) are really straight.
  - Assumes that experiencing attraction is the universal, ‘normal’ experience.
  - Invalidates the legitimacy of asexuality as an orientation.
  - Assumes that a woman does not know her own sexuality and needs a man to show her - misogyny.
- Points to take away:
  - Sexuality is not based on experience.
  - Erasure is a microaggression, which is a manifestation of biases that we hold.
  - Identities that seem ‘new’ or unfamiliar should still be respected.

**3. Aditya is non-binary and uses they/them pronouns. While you are speaking about them to your friend Ryan, Ryan points out that you have just misgendered Aditya accidentally.**

- How should we react to being told we have used the wrong pronouns?
  - Say sorry, quickly move on using the correct pronouns (especially important if you are in the presence of the person).
  - Don’t make a big deal out of it, such as by apologising profusely or complaining about how difficult it is for you to adjust to new pronouns.
- What should you do if you don’t know someone’s pronouns?
  - Ask them! E.g. offer your pronouns and ask for theirs.

## FAQs

### How do I deal with a disrespectful or disruptive participant?

In cases where a participant is genuinely well-meaning it is usually best to try and discuss the issue or answer their questions as patiently as you can. You can also ask the rest of the group if they disagree or have a different perspective on the issue. If a participant is interrupting or speaking over other participants, or using oppressive or demeaning language you should remind them of the rules that everyone agreed to at the beginning of the group session. If they continue to be disruptive, you can ask them to leave the room.

### What should I do if a participant has religious objections to LGBTQ+ people?

Remind the participant that, while everyone is entitled to their beliefs, this workshop is emphatically not intended as a debate about the rights or existence of LGBTQ+ people, as these are already promised by our own legislative frameworks, but rather a discussion about how best to support and advocate LGBTQ+ rights.

If you feel comfortable doing so, you can offer to speak to the participant after the workshop to discuss the issue in more detail. However, do have a list of resources to share for further information.

### What should I do if a participant is triggered or visibly upset during the workshop?

Ask the participant if they would like to leave the room or get some air. Ideally there should be a quiet area nearby where the participant can sit and calm down. If you feel comfortable doing so, you can offer to speak to the participant after the workshop, and/or you can refer them to the resources at the back of their handbook.

### Should I discuss my own experiences during the workshop?

If you identify as LGBTQ+ it can be useful to use personal anecdotes to explain concepts like microaggressions. However, you are under absolutely no pressure to disclose your gender identity or sexual orientation, and you do not need to share any personal information if you do not feel comfortable doing so.

## **Glossary**

Agender: A term referring to individuals who identifies as having no gender.

AFAB: 'Assigned Female at Birth'- term used to refer to someone who is born with genitalia read as 'female' and thus assumed to be a woman.

Alloromantic: a term referring to an individual who experiences romantic attraction.

Allosexual: a term referring to an individual who experiences sexual attraction.

AMAB: 'Assigned Male at Birth'- a term used to refer to someone who is born with genitalia read as 'male' and thus assumed to be a man.

Aromantic: a term referring to an individual who does not experience romantic attraction.

Asexual: a term referring to an individual who does not experience sexual attraction.

Biromantic: a term referring to a person of any gender who is romantically attracted to people of the same and other genders.

Bisexual: a term referring to a person of any gender who is sexually attracted to people of the same and other genders.

Cisgender/Cis: a term referring to an individual who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth; someone who is not transgender.

Cissexism: the belief that cisgender people are 'normal' and superior to transgender people; also a system of power that privileges cisgender people over transgender people in society.

Deadnaming: the act of calling a trans person by a name that they used prior to their transition. Deadnaming can be a form of transphobic harassment.

Demiromantic: a term referring to an individual who does not experience romantic attraction unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person.

Demisexual: a term referring to an individual who does not experience sexual attraction unless they have already formed a strong emotional bond with the person.

Dyadic: a term referring to an individual born with physical sex characteristics traditionally designated 'male' or 'female'; i.e. someone who is not intersex.

Gay: a term referring to a person of any gender who is primarily or exclusively sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender.

Gender Binary: the classification of gender into 'male' and 'female'.

Gender Dysphoria: an experience of discomfort or disconnect with one's assigned gender. Many, though not all, trans people experience dysphoria.

Gender Euphoria: an experience of euphoria or happiness upon being correctly gendered, in one's chosen name/pronouns or appearance.

Genderqueer: a similar term to 'non-binary', an umbrella term referring to individuals who do not identify with a binary gender identity.

Gender-fluid: a term referring to an individual whose gender identity changes over time.

Heteronormativity: the assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that being anything other than straight is a deviance from the norm.

Heteroromantic: a term referring to an individual who is primarily or exclusively romantically attracted to individuals of a different gender than their own.

Heterosexism: the belief that heterosexual people are 'normal' and superior to LGBTQIAP+ people; also a system of power that privileges heterosexual people over transgender people in society.

Heterosexual: a term referring to an individual who is primarily or exclusively sexually attracted to individuals of a different gender than their own.

Homophobia: prejudice against gay and lesbian people.

Homoromantic: a term referring to an individual who is primarily or exclusively romantically attracted to individuals of their own gender.

Homosexual: a term referring to an individual who is primarily or exclusively sexually attracted to individuals of their own gender.

Intersex: a term referring to an individual born with sex characteristics that do not fit traditional, binary definitions of male and female.

Lesbian: a term referring to a woman who is primarily or exclusively sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.

Non-binary: an umbrella term referring to any gender identity that does not fit into binary categories of 'male' and 'female'.

Panromantic: a term referring to an individual who is romantically attracted to all genders.

Pansexual: a term referring to an individual who is sexually attracted to all gender.

Privilege: a right or advantage available to individuals due to a characteristic that is prized within a system of power, e.g. white privilege, cis privilege.

Queer: in some contexts, an umbrella term referring to anyone who is not cisgender and/or heterosexual, or a term used by an individual to indicate that they are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. For many LGBTQ+ people, 'queer' remains highly offensive, while others are comfortable reclaiming it as a label.

Queerphobia: an umbrella term used to refer to prejudice and discrimination against LGBTQIAP+ people.

Trans/Transgender: An umbrella term referring to anyone whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

Transsexual: a term referring to anyone whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth. Although many older people still prefer this word, it is generally considered archaic.

Transmisogyny: prejudice against trans women; also the systematic oppression of trans women.

Transphobia: prejudice against transgender people; also the erasure of transgender people and the denial of trans identities.