

# LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVITY TOOLKIT

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This toolkit was created as a guidebook for making camps more inclusive and welcoming to LGBTQ+ campers and staff. All of these are suggestions, and can be modified for a camp community.

## **APPENDIX:**

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## PRONOUNS

**Why is it important to ask for pronouns?** - Because it is impossible to tell what someone's pronouns are just by looking at them and we shouldn't assume because gender expression is not the same as gender identity.

**Someone's pronouns may be:** he/him, she/her, they/them, zie/zer, xe/xir, he/they, she/they, any pronouns, or any combination of these

**What to do if someone has multiple pronouns?** (e.g. he/they, she/they) - In some cases, campers may have ways of telling people what pronouns they are comfortable with that day, such as colored bracelets. If there is a preference for a particular pronoun, use that one. Otherwise, you could alternate.

**Using pronouns at camp:** Always use someone's correct pronouns that they have told you. Misgendering someone can cause high levels of emotional distress. We suggest giving your pronouns along with your name when introducing yourself to normalize this. Campers and staff can be offered blank name tags and pronoun tags to fill in when they arrive at camp to wear for the first few days while everyone is getting to know each other. Getting creative with bed signs to put in their bunks or cabins is also a great option.

## STAFF AND LEADERSHIP TEAM TRAINING

What to do and not to do in response to a camper or staff member coming out:

DO:

- Match their energy
- Be supportive and validating
- Let them know that you are there for them they want to discuss anything further
- Encourage them to be themselves unless this would jeopardize their safety
- If a camper confides in you about bullying, handle it in the same way you would handle any other kind of bullying

- Active listening
- Express gratitude and appreciation for the fact that the camper or staff member trusted you enough to tell you

#### DON'T:

- Tell anyone else
- Make a big deal about it
- Create a double standard - e.g. policing them unfairly in terms of relationships or friendships
- Say anything to invalidate them e.g. "It's just a phase"

#### USING GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:

- "Everyone", "everybody", "kids", "y'all", anything else that isn't "boys" and "girls", as this may be misgendering someone and can cause social dysphoria
- Renaming the "boys' area" and "girls' area" as something less gendered, for example, you could name them after different colors, objects, animals, etc...

#### INCLUSIVE CAMP LIFE IN DAILY EVENTS

- Encouraging and normalizing friendships across ALL genders
  - Eliminating...
    - ◆ The idea that the opposite gender has "cooties"
      - This idea can be the most common among younger age groups
    - ◆ The idea that the opposite gender is only for dating- not friendships
      - This idea can be the most common among older age groups, as well as middle-school-aged teens who are exploring the world of dating
    - ◆ The belief that when opposite genders talk, it automatically means they are dating
    - ◆ Boys and Girls areas
    - ◆ Boys versus Girls games
      - This includes creating a "boy team" and "girl team" for games that involve splitting campers into teams
      - "Boys over here, girls over there"
- Shabbat Families
  - Different campers from each unit are put in "families" together and can sit together during Shabbat dinner
    - ◆ Make sure there is a fair split between different genders/gender identities
- Camp Meals
  - During select camp meals, we suggest that campers can freely sit wherever they want (with a staff member or two still sitting at each table)
    - ◆ This encourages friendships and interactions between all campers AND
    - ◆ Creates a fun, accepting, and interactive space for all campers
  - Encourage more interactions overall between different cabins in different age groups
    - ◆ For example: Having fun all-unit activities specifically aimed at allowing kids to have fun, while also meeting new friends across all genders and cabins
      - This means that we suggest keeping consistent the idea of eliminating "boys' teams" and "girls' teams"

## LONG-TERM INCLUSIVITY

- All-gender bathrooms
- All-gender cabins
  - This may take a few years to develop
  - We suggest asking “Are you comfortable living in an all-gender cabin?” on camper applications and developing the cabin (or cabins) from there
  - The developmental process of these cabins can be further decided by each individual camp, but this is simply how we suggest beginning the process
- These both help to keep camp an inclusive place in the long-run, where all campers can feel safe, welcome, and valid.