



## CORNERSTONE 2022 RESOURCE

### Gender Express Yourself *Evening Elective*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Melissa Shaw, Dubbs Weinblatt, Morgan Morris
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	In the session we will explore our gender complexities through embodied play using the mediums of fashion, makeup, design & curation, catwalking, and music to feel empowered in our gender(s).
<b>ABC GOALS:</b>	<p><b>Affective:</b> Participants will feel....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will feel empowered in their own gender.</li> <li>• Invited and inspired to find their own way into creative collaboration</li> </ul> <p><b>Behavior:</b> Participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the difference between drag, trans identity, and gender expression</li> <li>• Name a Jewish text explaining dressing to feel joy is not prohibited</li> </ul> <p><b>Cognitive:</b> Participants will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That gender expression can change at any point in time – it can be expansive and fluid</li> <li>• Drag is a way to explore one’s own gender expression and identity</li> <li>• That one does not need to be part of the LGBTQ community to feel empowered in their gender or to explore it</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	Audience of 20; target age range of any age
<b>TIMING:</b>	75 minutes.
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Handout/Projection of Robbie Medwed Tweet thread [ <a href="#">Gender Through Drag Text.pdf</a> ] Gender Through Drag Definitions [ <a href="#">Gender Definitions</a> ] How To Choose Your Drag Name [ <a href="#">How To Choose Your Drag Name</a> ] Build Your House Handout [ <a href="#">Build Your House handout</a> ]
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	Music and Sound system, Projector and Screen, Thrifted Clothing?, Wigs, handouts,
<b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>	This program should take place in a room with a big enough space to dance and catwalk, as well as having some chairs.

#### SESSION TIMELINE



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- 00:00-00:05 – Coming into the space, gravitating towards a chair with an item of clothing on it, definition ice breaker.
- 00:05-00:15 – Building the space together, setting intentions, going through the agenda. Name the ancestors.
- 00:15-00:30 – History of drag. Informational piece through a Jewish Lense and open space for questions, framing of feeling empowered in your own gender.
- 00:30-00:35 - Framing of the drag show
- 01:05-01:15 – Debriefing: What feels scary about expressing gender that feels affirming? What's the barrier?

### SESSION OUTLINE:

- 00:00-00:05 – Coming into the space for the activity and we will ask participants to gravitate towards a chair with an item of clothing on it. Taped to the object, the participants will find either a word or definition. We will invite everyone to stand up and match words and definitions by mingling around the space.
- 00:05-00:15 – Introductions building the space together, setting intentions, going through the agenda for the

This is a place of radical acceptance and you can stop at any time.

Growth and Learning Mindset

Take Space/Make Space

Take Lessons, Leave Stories

Trust Intent, Tend Impact

Prepare for Non-closure

Stay present/Self-regulate

Have Fun!

What else? Participants can add their own intentions here

- 00:15-00:30 - History of Drag, Ground in Jewish Text, Space for terms questions, Feeling empowered in our own genders

Session leader: *Before we dive too deep into the rest of our content, I want to make sure we're all on the same page when it comes to definitions around identity.*

*As a refresher, what is (session leader can ask the room for definitions):*

#### **GENDER IDENTITY:**

*A person's inner understanding of the gender(s) with which they identify. This is each person's unique knowing or feeling, and is separate from a person's physical body or appearance (although often related).*

#### **GENDER EXPRESSION:**

*The manner in which one outwardly expresses, signals, or performs their gender.*

#### **GENDER NON-CONFORMING:**

*Used to describe people whose gender expression does not align with societal expectations based on their perceived gender.*

#### **TRANSGENDER or TRANS:**

**Commented [MS1]:** hows this?

**Commented [MS2R1]:** do we have them sit together and go around? Or do we just let it stand?

**Commented [DW3R1]:** love this. let's have them sit with their definition buddy

**Commented [MM4R1]:** love this!



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*An umbrella term for anyone who knows themselves to be a gender that is different from the gender they were assigned at birth.*

### **DRAG:**

*A way for someone to express a different side of themselves, over-exaggerating different looks, style and body language to create a persona.*

*Any questions about these terms or any other terms from your chairs?*

## HISTORY OF DRAG

So where did drag come from any way?

A Brief History of Drag (that we know of)

- Although there is a lot of speculation about the beginnings of drag, many believe that it started in the theater during the Shakespearean era. Men would dress as women for roles since women were not allowed to perform on stage.

- The word 'drag' is believed to have theatrical origins too. The dresses men wore to play female characters would drag along the floor.

- Many historians trace England's first Drag performer to Princess Seraphina, an 18<sup>th</sup> century gentleman's servant whose real name was name of John Cooper. Princess Seraphina was known to be seen in Molly houses, gay bars of the time, and seemed to evade the rampant heterosexism of the time.

- In the US, the modern drag movement has roots in Vaudeville and scholars point to Julian Eltinge, actor and singer of the Early 20<sup>th</sup> century as a pioneer of the form, taking stage as a "femme mimic" and female impersonator. Performers like Eltinge fought against "homosexual panic" of the time by making clear that they were men in women's clothing so as not to fool audience members.

- In the 1950s and '60s, troupes of drag performers toured the U.S. — even as they existed in a "legal in-between," since people could still be arrested for dressing as the opposite sex.

- Drag balls, which originated in New York in the 1970s, involved owning the runway in the finest drag around in order to wow the judges and go home with a clutch of trophies. This was where the concept of the drag mother took hold. Seasoned queens would take up-and-coming drag artists under their wing, to show them how to work a stage as well as their look. They often provided a refuge to youngsters who may be going through a difficult time in their lives, and not just those intending to enter the drag world.

- Drag ball culture was featured in the 1990 Documentary Paris is Burning directed by Jennie Livingston.

- Wigstock was an annual outdoor drag festival with impromptu beginnings led by a handful of performers in 1984 in Manhattan's East Village. It took place on Labor Day Continuing, with a few gaps, until 2005, the festival would serve as the unofficial end to the summer for the gay community of New York City. After a 12-year gap, the festival was revived by Lady Bunny and Neil Patrick Harris on September 1, 2018 at Pier 17 of the South Street Seaport in New York City. The name is a spoof on the Historic 1969 Woodstock Festival.



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•Spear headed by drag superstar RuPaul, the first series of *Drag Race* aired in 2009. Its mix of challenges, costume creation, skits and impersonations has made it appointment television for a surprisingly diverse audience (Dame Judi Dench is a big fan) and has even influenced the language of drag itself.

Session leader passes around the text study sheet and shares the following prompt: *Now we are going to ground this conversation in some text in the form of a Tweet. Can I have a few volunteers read the text?*

*Now take 1-2 minutes to read this to yourself. We'll all discuss once everyone is finished.*

After 1-2 minutes, begin discussing the text.

Some prompts for questions to get the discussion started

- *What did you think about the text?*
- *How does this translate to today?*
- *What are your thoughts on the term 'cross-dressing'?*
  - *How does this play into the idea of gendering clothing?*

*Think to yourself for a moment: do you have an article of clothing or accessory that makes you feel really empowered in your gender and/or that brings you joy? Are any of them something that might be considered "meant for a different gender?"*

*The point of this workshop is to explore all of the different ways we can feel empowered in our genders. You don't have to be part of the LGBTQ community to feel empowered in your gender; we all have a gender identity and how we express that identity is different for each person. There's no limit or expectation on how one presents in their gender. This is a space meant for that exploration. We want you all to use this time to try new things, experiment, support each other and ask questions. Mostly, we want you to have fun with this. Gender expression can be very challenging for some folks and it can also be really liberating once we figure out what makes us feel the most ourselves.*

*It's very important to keep in mind that gender identity and/or expression is not the joke or punchline in any performance.*

- 00:30-00:35 - Participants are broken up into small "houses" based on their preference of role on their team. Each team can include a performer, designers, a "DJ", choreographer, etc. Participants will be handed a Build-a House/Drag Name Handout that will help guild building their personas and sent off "to get work."
- 00:35-00:55 – After the framing of the activity, you will send the teams off for their Drag Creation – the teams will work together to choreograph, rehearse, dress and design a "Gender Express Yourself Performance." Each member of the team will have a different area that they will focus on within the house. Session leaders are encouraged to walk around the different teams to support them, and offer them advice and support.
- 00:55-1:05 – The next part is all about the Performance! Each team will walk/strut/dance the "catwalk" to music selected by their "House". After they have walked, they should have the chance to talk about their house and the inspiration for their fashion/make-up/house. Session leaders will also perform if needed as part of the team.
- 1:05-1:15- Debrief:
  - What are you taking away from this experience?



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- What feels scary about expressing gender and what that feels affirming? Was there a barrier? What may it have been?
- How could you bring any part of this back to your camp?
- Final thoughts?

### **BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP:**

Taking this activity to camp is simple, use this program guide as a handout to how you would like your activity to run. Keep in mind the age and experiences of the campers when modifying. This is a program for everyone, but you know your camp and camp culture - feel free to emphasize play and empowerment through gender expression by augmenting the activity for length. Feel free to expand this program over a course of hours or days as you set campers up to explore.