

# BECOMING JOHANNA

YOUTH & GENDER MEDIA PROJECT STUDY GUIDE



THE  
Youth & Gender  
MEDIA PROJECT

arcus  
FOUNDATION

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FLEDGLING FUND  
*helping stories take flight*

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# WELCOME!

Welcome to the Youth & Gender Media Project study guide for *Becoming Johanna*. We're pleased that you've decided to join the effort to create inclusive communities for all youth, regardless of where they fall on the spectrum of gender identity and expression. By doing this work, you are joining a growing number of educators, parents and other professionals who understand that young people need safe environments where they can be true to their own internal sense of gender in order to effectively learn and thrive. And the good news is that gender inclusion work intersects beautifully with all the other work that needs to be done to embrace and celebrate diversity. We look forward to supporting and hearing from you as you join us on this fascinating and fun journey around re-defining gender for the 21st century.

## ABOUT THE FILM AND GUIDES

Filmed over the course of five years, *Becoming Johanna* is a portrait of a teen-aged transgender Latina who faces bullying at school and misunderstanding at home. When she gets kicked out of her school and her home for standing up for herself, she finds a loving foster family and a sympathetic alternative high school principal who help her to grow into the beautiful young woman she was meant to be. This film is ideal for high school students, but it's also appropriate for middle school groups as well. In conjunction with the discussions and activities in the study guide, the film can help to end gender-based bullying and provide high school students with the inspiration to be true to themselves.

The four films and accompanying study guides of the Youth & Gender Media Project can be used individually or in combination. Each film targets a particular audience that together encompasses all stakeholders in K-12 communities. To learn more about the other films in the project, please visit [youthandgendermediaproject.org](http://youthandgendermediaproject.org).

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to accompany screenings of *Becoming Johanna* in high school health, social science, and media classes, and during other school group meetings such as GSA and diversity clubs. It can also be used in hospitals and health centers that serve adolescents, youth groups, and other youth community settings. It is meant to spark discussion about gender—not to be a comprehensive training curriculum for teaching about this very important topic. For more thorough trainings on incorporating gender in your school's curricula, please see the resources section of this guide.

This guide is flexible to suit the needs of various audiences and time constraints. For example, if you have only one class period to devote to the film, you can screen the film and use the group discussion questions provided to reflect on the topics.

If you have a longer time period, feel free to incorporate any of the activities below that make the most sense for you, your goals, your time frame, and your group. You can pick and choose discussion questions and activities that resonate with you most.

Before implementing any of these activities, you may want to familiarize yourself with the concepts in the film, and reflect upon the role of gender in your

life. As a teacher or facilitator, you are also learning. Some of the language in this guide may be new to you, but you don't have to be an expert to be an understanding and compassionate ally to your students. Learning these concepts takes time, and there are many resources to help you continue on your journey.

This guide will help you begin to create the kinds of safe spaces that are necessary for thoughtful discussion and reflection about gender. However, some activities may be more or less appropriate for your particular setting. Please use your judgment when selecting activities, keeping the comfort and safety of your students as your number one priority. The most important thing to remember is that we all want to create a safe and supportive learning environment in which our students can thrive.

## WHY I CREATED THE YOUTH & GENDER MEDIA PROJECT

I was a gender nonconforming child who loved to play with both dollhouses and Hot Wheels, wear pants and dresses. Like any child, I wanted it all! Around second grade, I started to get teased and bullied for my "sissy" ways and decided to give up "girly" things in order to evade the harassment that I intuitively knew would only get worse as I grew older. But this also meant that I abandoned an important part of myself.

In the early 2000s I began to read about children who were gender creative and transgender and were living in communities that supported them. These children and their families were doing what my community hadn't been able to do when I was a child. As a social change filmmaker, I wanted to document and help grow the movement that embraces rather than suppresses children with gender expansive identities.

In 2007, I began work on a film that eventually turned into the Youth & Gender Media Project, a series of short films about gender expansive young people like Johanna and their families and communities. I'm happy to say that the films have screened in festivals around the world and are being used in hundreds of middle schools, high schools and colleges throughout North America to help make the world safe for youth of any and all manifestations of gender identity and expression.

I first met Johanna at Los Angeles Children's Hospital when she was participating in Bamby Salcedo's transgender youth clinic. Bamby, a fierce transgender leader, had overcome her own demons in order to support the troubled trans youth of color in her beloved city. When I asked Bamby which of her young clients' stories could make a film that would build empathy and compassion for trans youth, she immediately suggested Johanna, the youngest member of her clinic. In her own way, Johanna was as fierce as Bamby, and I suspect that Bamby hoped that the spotlight of a film might convince Johanna that her life story of courage and determination would inspire other trans and gender expansive youth to be true to themselves. And this is exactly what has happened. Now Johanna and I screen the film for young people who inevitably come away with renewed hope.



### ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Jonathan Skurnik's many award-winning [documentaries](#) have broadcast on PBS and cable channels in the US and on European television. His films have screened at over a hundred film festivals and art galleries around the world. As an activist and educator, Jonathan creates ground-breaking grassroots outreach and engagement projects for his films that provide transformational educational experiences through facilitated screenings, activities and discussions and immersive digital resources on handheld devices and the web. Jonathan also teaches documentary filmmaking classes at universities, writes and directs [narrative films](#), and creates [video art installations](#).



# WHY TALK ABOUT GENDER WITH YOUTH?

In recent years, gender has become an increasingly prevalent topic of discussion in our culture, and it has become clear that the issue needs to be brought up and addressed in different contexts over time—not just for students, but for teachers, administrators and parents as well.

As educators, we are all invested in providing safe environments for our children to learn. Teaching and learning about gender can help prevent and transform bullying behaviors—which are often based on gender stereotypes—at home, at school, and in our communities. In addition to cultivating empathy and compassion for young people who express their gender in different ways, teaching about this topic can help foster a culture of respect that celebrates *all* youth, regardless of the ways in which they express or identify their gender.

Addressing this topic early and often can also help youth who feel isolated because of other people’s reactions to their gender identities or expressions. These youth are at greater risk of suffering harassment, bullying, dropping out of school, and committing suicide. According to GSLEN’S 2013 National School Climate Survey, 75.1% of transgender students feel unsafe at school because of the way they are treated regarding their gender expression. Transgender youth experience bullying at alarming rates—73.6% of transgender youth experience verbal harassment at school, 32.5% experience physical harassment, and 16.2% experience physical assault.<sup>1</sup> Tragically, *half of transgender youth have contemplated suicide, and a quarter of them have attempted it.*<sup>2</sup> While it is impossible to know how many deaths can be traced back to bullying and harassment at school, clearly there would be a world of difference if school curricula and policies actively created safe environments for all youth.

## CULTIVATING RESPECT

In order to cultivate a culture of respect, it’s important to know what not to say.

- Don’t out people.
- Don’t make assumptions about a person’s gender or the gender of partners, family members or friends.
- It is not respectful to ask about a person’s anatomy, surgery, hormones, birth names, etc. It’s important to respect a person’s privacy and asking such personal questions can potentially trigger emotions that negatively impact a person’s well-being.
- Always use preferred pronouns and names [see opposite page].

### PROBLEMATIC VERSUS PREFERRED TERMS

PROBLEMATIC	PREFERRED
Tranny/trannie, transgendered, transgenders, a transgender	Transgender (as an adjective, not a noun)
He/she, she-male, “it,” shim, lady man, freak	Transgender (and always use preferred pronouns)
Transvestite	Cross-dresser
Hermaphrodite	Intersex

# GENDER BASICS

Whether this is your first time teaching about gender, or if you just need a refresher, it's helpful to review some key terms. The language we use about gender is critical to understanding this topic. Language is constantly evolving, and what matters is not who is using the terms "the right way," but how we are using the terms right now!

**Biological Sex/Birth-Assigned Sex:** At birth, people are assigned a biological sex—male, female or intersex—based on physical attributes such as reproductive anatomy.

**Gender:** While many people incorrectly use "sex" and "gender" interchangeably, "gender" refers to *cultural* ideas of what it means to be a man or woman or other gender. These expectations can vary significantly depending on the particular cultural and historical context.

**Gender Binary:** The cultural idea that there are only two distinct and very different genders: female and male.

**Gender Expression:** The ways in which people express themselves to others through clothing, hairstyle, physical attributes and ways of speaking, moving, and behaving. What is deemed appropriate gender expression for a particular gender is largely dependent on the specific cultural and historical context.

**Gender Identity:** A person's internal sense of themselves as female, male, some combination of the two, neither, both, or one of the many other ways people identify their gender. While many people's internal gender identity matches their biological sex, plenty of people have a gender identity that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. And for some people, gender identity is fluid and changes over time.

**Gender Spectrum:** The idea that gender is not binary, but rather a spectrum with infinite possibilities for how a person may express and/or identify their gender.

**Cisgender:** When someone's biological sex, gender identity and gender expression align.

**Transgender:** Someone whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. The words transgender or trans\* (trans followed by an asterisk) are sometimes used as a broad term to describe a range of gender identities, expressions, and experiences that are not cisgender.

There are infinite combinations of ways for people to present and understand their own gender—and not everyone who identifies or expresses gender outside of the gender binary necessarily identifies as transgender. These identifications may be different from rigid cultural expectations of gender and are referred to as **gender expansive**, **gender creative**, **genderqueer** or **queer**, **non-binary**, and **gender nonconforming**, among many other terms. In addition, this terminology tends to change over time, as society's understanding of gender continues to evolve.

People understand and experience gender in a wide variety of ways.

Unfortunately, when youth step outside of our traditional ideas of how boys and girls should look or behave, they can encounter cruelty, harassment, bullying from other students—and sometimes from adults as well, including teachers, school staff and parents of their peers. Much of this negative behavior stems from a lack of education and appreciation for gender diversity.

As educators, parents, and community members, we all have our own ideas about gender based on our lived experiences. Regardless of what your personal beliefs regarding gender are, we are all in agreement that our goal is to create safe spaces for *all* of our youth in order to protect them from emotional, verbal and physical harm. This means creating spaces where young people can feel free to be who they are, regardless of their gender identity or expression. Students who feel free to be themselves at school—without the fear of judgment and harassment—also perform better academically.<sup>3</sup>

## PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS

Preferred gender pronouns are the pronouns or set of pronouns that a person prefers. Some people feel more comfortable using a pronoun different from those associated with their biological sex, regardless of their gender identity or expression. Gendered pronouns like "he" and "she" can be uncomfortable and limiting for some people who prefer gender-neutral pronouns or to be referred to by name only. The English language is evolving to include some gender neutral pronouns. Currently, a lot of people who don't identify with pronouns like "her" or "him" are using a singular "they" instead.

### HELLO

My name is

My preferred pronouns are

<sup>1</sup> Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. The 2013 National School Climate Survey. <http://www.glsen.org/article/2013-national-school-climate-survey>

<sup>2</sup> Grossman, A.H. & D'Augelli, A.R. (2007). Transgender Youth and Life-Threatening Behaviors. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviors*. 37(5), 527-37.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING SAFE SPACES

Before you screen the film or complete any of the activities in this guide, explain to students that you will be learning about how different people experience gender. This will involve reflecting on our own experiences with gender, so it's important that we first agree upon how we will discuss these issues so that everyone feels safe and comfortable participating.

Ask students, "What are our shared agreements about our discussion here today? How do we want people to treat each other so that everyone feels comfortable participating?" If someone names "respect" as an expectation, ask the group to name specific ways they can demonstrate respect toward each other. What does respect look like? Write their expectations on the board or a flipchart so that you can refer back to it throughout the discussion and group activities if necessary.

Each group's agreements will be different. However, you may want to begin with some sample expectations, like:

- Confidentiality: Don't share outside of this room.
- Use "I" statements.
- Be specific: Don't generalize about people or groups.
- Allow others to speak without interrupting.
- Respect all of the different perspectives in the room.

### WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE ACTS DISRESPECTFULLY

If someone violates your shared agreements by acting disrespectfully, follow these guidelines:

Try to turn it into a teachable moment. If someone is being disruptive, call out the behavior and explain why it's inappropriate or hurtful. Refer back to the agreements that were created at the beginning of the session and make it clear why this kind of behavior is not accepted by your school.

After you address the disrespectful behavior, redirect the group to the discussion or group activity.

If someone insists on repeating slurs or hurtful phrases, it may be necessary to ask them to leave.



## TIPS FOR TEACHERS AND FACILITATORS

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Before facilitating any group discussions or activities, take some time to reflect on your own potential biases and limitations based on your knowledge and training. What are your own thoughts on gender? What are your thoughts about the information presented in *Becoming Johanna*? Watch the film by yourself beforehand and think about how you would answer the discussion questions.

Be open and respectful of the differences in the room. Help to create a safe space where all can participate by demonstrating a positive and non-judgmental attitude.

Be fellow learners—be honest about what you do and don't know. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know," and refer to the resources in this guide to learn more.

Be aware you may have students who are out as transgender or non-binary, some who are not out, and others who are questioning. Don't make assumptions about them, and don't rely on students who are out to speak for the whole community.

Ensure everyone is heard. Ask, "Is there anyone who hasn't spoken yet who has something to share?" However, do not push anyone who is not comfortable to share or participate.

Remember you are not in the role of therapist. If someone shares something that may require further intervention, acknowledge it positively (e.g., say, "That was brave, thank you for sharing that."). Then bring it back to the group (e.g., "Can other people relate to this?") Be sure to follow up with appropriate school staff if a student does share something that merits follow up. See the resources section in this guide and "How to be a Safe Ally to Youth" for more information about connecting students to resources.

## HOW TO BE A SAFE ALLY TO YOUTH

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**Maintain confidentiality:** Let the person know that what they tell you is confidential—unless you know that they are in danger or in danger of hurting themselves or others.

**Don't make assumptions:** Don't assume anything about the person who is talking to you until they tell you or you ask them.

**Show respect:** Respect the pronouns the person prefers to use and affirm them.

**Educate yourself:** Continue to educate and update yourself on current gender terminology, laws, and policies that are in place so that you can be a trusted resource.

**Advocate:** Speak up for the needs of transgender and non-binary youth at your school. Advocate for staff trainings. Talk about people of all genders in a positive way in your classroom.

**Provide access:** Make sure you are aware of all of the resources that exist locally in your community and nationally to support transgender and non-binary youth. National resources for support are listed in the resources section of this guide.

# PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY

Before you screen *Becoming Johanna* for your students and engage them in any discussion or activities related to the film, use this exercise to stimulate discussion and ideas around gender stereotypes.

## GENDER BOXES

**TIMING:** 15-20 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Board or flip chart and markers

**PREPARATION:** Review the instructions.

Draw two boxes on the board or on a flip chart. In one, write “Girl” and in the other, write “Boy.”

Ask students to brainstorm as many words as they can think of that describe what people think is “okay” for girls—characteristics, toys, behaviors, colors, emotions, etc. Explain that the task is not to write what you feel personally, but stereotypes of what most people think is okay for girls.

Repeat the exercise with the “Boy” box.

Ask the students: “What happens when people step outside of these boxes? What might happen to them physically? Socially? Emotionally? At school? At home?”

Outside of the box, write what students say could happen (they could be called names, bullied, harassed, hurt, they may want to hurt themselves, etc.)

**NOTE:** At this point, students may express some inappropriate words that people are unfortunately called when they step outside of gender norms. While you may avoid writing these words down, acknowledge the truth of these statements, and encourage students to stay respectful during the discussion.

When students are finished brainstorming, ask the group the following reflection questions:

1. What did you notice about the boxes? How do people think girls are “supposed” to be different from boys? How would the boxes be different if we were talking about “women” and “men” instead of “girls” and “boys”? Where do you think these ideas come from?
2. Who here can relate to the characteristics in both boxes? What are some of the ways that you have lived inside of the “girl” box or the “boy” box? What are some of the ways we react when we’re told that we don’t fit into our boxes—that we are not acting the way a girl or a boy “should” act?
3. Why do some people get so angry when people don’t fit inside one of these boxes?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [15-30 MINUTES]

After screening the film, allow some time for participants to share their thoughts and reflections. Use some or all of the questions below to guide the discussion. Feel free to pick and choose the questions that resonate most with you.

1. If someone asked you what this film is about, how would you describe it? What would you say are the main themes?
2. What did you learn from this film? What is the main message you took away from it?
3. How did you feel as you watched the film? How did you feel when it ended?

Adapted from Keshet:  
[keshetonline.org/  
resource/gender-boxes](http://keshetonline.org/resource/gender-boxes)

4. What do you think influenced your reaction to the film? Your gender? Your cultural background?
5. Refer back to the activity you completed before watching the film. What are some of the ways that Johanna stepped outside of society's "gender boxes"? How did people in her life respond?
6. Can you describe a single moment or scene in the film that especially resonated with you? How did this moment make you feel?
7. If you could ask anyone in the film a question, who would it be and what would you ask them?
8. How is Johanna's story similar or different to examples of stories about transgender people you have encountered in the media?
9. Can you name all of the different factors Johanna had to overcome on her journey? Can you relate to any of these challenges? Which of these challenges do you think might disappear if people were more accepting about gender?
10. Johanna had to face a harsh reality that her mom wasn't going to provide for her because of how she identified her gender. How does that make you feel? How would you feel if you were in Johanna's shoes? In her mother's shoes?
11. What do you think of Johanna's mother's decision to hospitalize Johanna? What did you think of her mom saying she was just doing what the mental health authorities told her to do? If you could interview Johanna's mom, what would you ask her?
12. In the film, Johanna suffers from rejection when she is removed from her home and put into foster care. Have you experienced or heard of other situations in which young people were put into foster care? How do you think it would feel if you were in Johanna's shoes?
13. Johanna's foster mom gave Johanna gifts that validate who she is. Can you think about a time when someone showed you they understood who you really are?
14. Johanna develops a relationship with her principal, but the principal says, "She fought very hard to not let me help her." What do you think might have been going on for Johanna that she initially didn't respond to her principal's offers?
15. Why do you think Johanna's principal continued to support Johanna, even when Johanna resisted efforts for help?
16. Do you have any adults in your life who serve as mentors, similar to Johanna's principal? What do they do to make you feel supported? Do you support other people in your life in similar ways?
17. At the end of the film, Johanna says she's accepted that she can't change her mom. Can you relate to this in your own life?
18. Johanna faced a lot of difficulty for being who she is, but as her principal says in the film, "She's not going to accept that the world's not going to accept her." Why do you think so many get upset when people don't behave in ways that we expect them to behave?
19. How do you think Johanna would be treated at your school or in your community? Why?
20. What do you think you could do as an individual to help create an environment that is inclusive for Johanna and for all people? As an individual? At your school? In your community? What rules or laws do you think you can change to be more inclusive?

# GROUP ACTIVITIES

Please select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your group and timing.

## GENDERED ADS

Meets Common Core  
Standards for English  
Language Arts

**TIMING:** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Sample ads  
(see [bit.ly/1X7mMoK](http://bit.ly/1X7mMoK) for  
examples), art supplies  
(markers, crayons,  
magazines, glue, scissors,  
paper, etc.)

**PREPARATION:** Read the  
instructions and select  
advertisements you feel  
are best for your group.

Display a toy ad for the entire class. Answer these questions collaboratively with the whole class:

- What is the purpose of this ad?
- Who do you think created this advertisement? What was their goal in making it?
- Who is the target audience for this ad? Why do you think this ad is made for that particular audience? How would it be different if it were made for a different audience?
- How might different people interpret this ad differently?
- What is this ad saying to you about gender?
- What is accurate or inaccurate about the messages about gender in this ad?

Try to get multiple answers from different students for each question, as different students are likely to interpret the same ad differently depending on their particular life experiences, gender, and background.

Distribute additional advertisements to pairs or small groups. Have students answer the questions above for their ad.

Pass out markers and art supplies and invite learners to recreate the ads so that they appeal to ALL genders—not just to boys or to girls. To do this, they can write directly on the print advertisement, they can also use cut-out speech bubbles (like ones in comics and graphic novels) to recreate the text in the ad, or they can create a brand new ad from scratch.

Ask the groups to present their new ads to the whole class. As a group, reflect together:

- How would you react if you saw a toy advertisement that looked like one of the ads you created? Would you be surprised to see it?
- The department store chain Target recently made the decision not to designate toys as “boys’ toys” or “girls’ toys.” What do you think about this decision? Are there toys you would have played with more when you were younger if they weren’t marked “boys’” or “girls’” toys?
- Can you think of other examples of things that you see in your daily life that are marketed specifically toward boys or girls? How do you think these messages affect how people think boys and girls are supposed to behave?



## EMPATHY JOURNAL

Meets Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

**TIMING:** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Paper and pencils

**PREPARATION:** Review the instructions.

Tell students they will be creating a journal entry from Johanna's point of view. This means they will not be writing about themselves or their own feelings. Instead, they will create a fictional story that imagines how Johanna would feel at a typical day in *their* school.

Suggest that students describe one day in Johanna's life: What is her day like at school? How is she treated? What aspects of school does Johanna enjoy and which are less enjoyable? What does she do after school?

Ask students if anyone would like to share their empathy journal.

As a class, reflect upon how it feels to write from Johanna's perspective:

- How did it feel to write from Johanna's perspective instead of your own?
- How is Johanna's experience different from yours? How is it similar?
- What can we do to make sure students like Johanna are welcome and supported at our school?



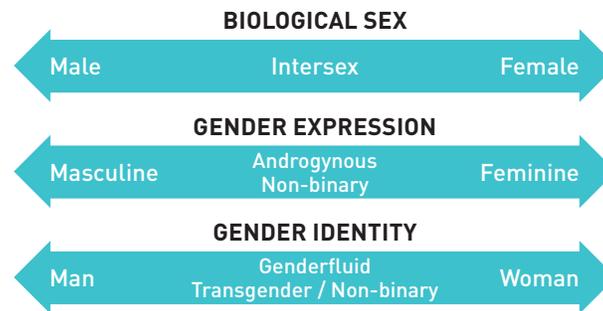
# GENDER SPECTRUM

**TIMING:** 20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Board or flipchart and markers, copies of the Gender Spectrum Worksheet

**PREPARATION:** Review the instructions. Make copies of the Gender Spectrum Worksheet.

Draw a graphic like this on the board or flipchart:



Explain the following terms:

**Biological Sex/Birth-Assigned Sex:** At birth, people are assigned a biological sex—male, female or intersex—based on physical attributes such as reproductive anatomy.

**Gender Expression:** The ways in which people express themselves to others through clothing, hairstyle, physical attributes and ways of speaking, moving, and behaving. What is deemed appropriate gender expression for a particular gender is largely dependent on the specific cultural and historical context.

**Gender Identity:** A person’s internal sense of themselves as female, male, some combination of the two, neither, both, or one of the many other ways people identify their gender. While many people’s internal gender identity matches their biological sex, plenty of people have a gender identity that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. And for some people, gender identity is fluid and changes over time.

Pass out **Gender Spectrum Worksheets**. Ask the group to plot themselves on the three lines. If they are not comfortable doing so, they can just think about where they would place themselves. They can also fold their paper in half for privacy if they wish.

Now, ask the group to think back to when they were younger. Where did they fall on the gender spectrum then? Did they dress as the gender they were assigned at birth? Did they play with games and toys that were associated with their gender? How did they feel inside? If they’d like, they can plot themselves on their worksheet again. Is it the same or different?

If you are in an extremely supportive environment, such as a GSA club, students who feel comfortable can plot themselves on the chart at the front of the room or share their worksheets with the group. *Please keep student privacy and safety in mind first and foremost!*

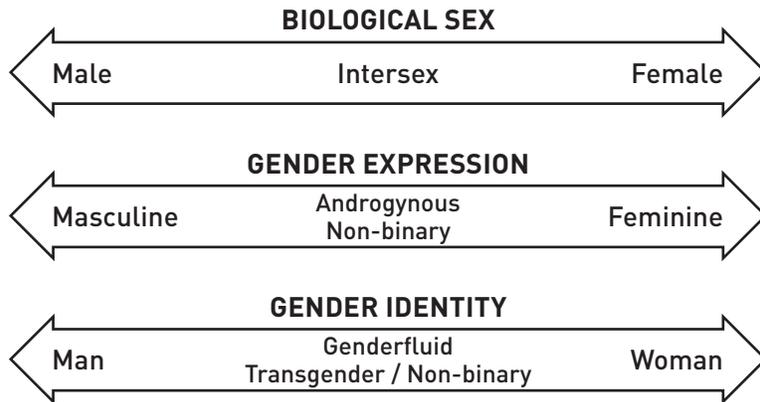
After everyone who is comfortable doing so shares with the group, have the group spend ten minutes reflecting on the following questions together:

1. What do you notice when doing this exercise? Were there any surprises? Did any memories come up for you?
2. Think about your gender expression and gender identity when you were younger and now. Are there any similarities? Any differences? What factors contributed to those differences? (For example, did you have restrictions when you were younger that you do not have now? Do you have restrictions now that you did not have when you were younger?)
3. Have you ever felt as though you weren’t “acting like a boy” or “acting like a girl”? What would have made you feel supported to be yourself? How could you provide that kind of support for students at your school?

Adapted from Gender Spectrum:  
[www.genderspectrum.org/resources/education](http://www.genderspectrum.org/resources/education)

# GENDER SPECTRUM WORKSHEET

Use these lines to map your own gender. Then answer the questions that follow.



1. Was mapping your own gender difficult or easy? What made it so?

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2. What are some ways that this model helps us to understand gender better?

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3. What are some of the ways that this model is still not enough to really understand gender?

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4. Has your gender profile changed over time? In what ways?

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5. What is your comfort level with your own gender? What about the gender of others?

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6. What does the "Gender Spectrum" mean to you?

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## SILHOUETTES

**TIMING:** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Large sheets of paper, such as butcher paper (if unavailable, substitute with regular sized paper), markers

**PREPARATION:** Review the instructions.

Invite students to trace their silhouettes on butcher paper. On one side of the paper, ask them to write out or draw the stereotypical expectations that society has for their gender (dress a certain way, behave a certain way, etc.). On the other side, ask them to write out or draw images that represent their gender identities and expressions.

Ask if any students would be comfortable presenting their silhouettes to the larger group, explaining what is similar and different on the two sides.

Reflect together:

- What's similar on the two sides of your silhouette? What's different?
- How do you think your silhouette would be different if you were a different gender?
- What do you think Johanna's silhouette would look like? What expectations does she face? What challenges does she face? Can you relate to any of those challenges?

# TAKE FURTHER ACTION!

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Examine your school's dress code. Is it respectful and inclusive of the range of gender expressions at your school? If not, rewrite it and present it to your school administrators. How do *you* think it should look?

Write an op-ed for your local newspaper about how transgender or gender expansive students are treated at your school. What should your school be doing to be more inclusive and supportive?

While some trans youth have positive experiences coming out in school, many trans youth do not. Come up with three things your school needs to address (e.g., nondiscrimination policy, bathrooms, sports protocols, etc.) to be fully trans-inclusive and present it to school administrators.

Nearly half of trans youth think about killing themselves. About a quarter attempt to end their life. During suicide prevention week in September, create a trans youth suicide prevention campaign or event to help raise awareness and support trans and non-binary youth.

Organize an event on Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20 to recognize all of the trans people around the world who have been killed.



# RESOURCES

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## **AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION**

The ACLU is a national organization advocating individual rights, by litigating, legislating, and educating the public on a broad array of issues affecting individual freedom in the United States, including the rights of LGBT individuals.

[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

## **FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT™**

A research, intervention, education and policy initiative that works to prevent health and mental health risks for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children and youth, including suicide, homelessness and HIV – in the context of their families, cultures and faith communities.

[www.familyproject.sfsu.edu](http://www.familyproject.sfsu.edu)

## **GAY, LESBIAN AND STRAIGHT EDUCATION NETWORK**

GLSEN conducts extensive and original research to inform our evidence-based solutions for K-12 education and authors developmentally appropriate resources for educators to use throughout their school community. Every day GLSEN works to ensure that LGBT students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment.

[www.GLSEN.org](http://www.GLSEN.org)

## **GAY STRAIGHT ALLIANCE NETWORK**

The GSA Network is a next-generation LGBTQ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains queer, trans and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities.

[www.gsanetwork.org](http://www.gsanetwork.org)

## **GENDER DIVERSITY**

Increases the awareness and understanding of the wide range of gender variations in children, adolescents, and adults by providing family support, building community, increasing societal awareness, and improving the well-being for people of all gender identities and expressions.

[www.genderdiversity.org](http://www.genderdiversity.org)

## **GENDER SPECTRUM**

Gender Spectrum helps create gender sensitive and inclusive environments for all children and teens. They provide consultation, training and events designed to help families, educators, professionals, and organizations understand and address the concepts of gender identity and expression.

[www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org)

## **GLAAD (GAY & LESBIAN ALLIANCE AGAINST DEFAMATION)**

GLAAD works with print, broadcast and online news sources to bring people powerful stories from the LGBT community that build support for equality. When the media get it wrong, GLAAD responds and advocates for fairness and accuracy.

[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

## **HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION: WELCOMING SCHOOLS**

Welcoming Schools, a project of the HRC Foundation, is a comprehensive approach to improving school climate in elementary school environments with training, resources and lessons encouraging educators and families to embrace family diversity, develop LGBTQ-inclusive schools, prevent bias-based bullying and gender stereotyping and support transgender and gender-expansive students.

[www.welcomingschools.org](http://www.welcomingschools.org)

## **INTERSEX SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA**

ISNA provides information about Intersex conditions and links to support groups.

[www.isna.org](http://www.isna.org)

## **KESHET**

Keshet works for a world in which all Jewish organizations and communities are strengthened by LGBT inclusive policy, programming, culture, and leadership. See Keshet's curricula addressing gender and sexual orientation in Jewish settings.

[www.keshetonline.org](http://www.keshetonline.org)

## **LAMBDA LEGAL**

The oldest and largest national legal organization whose mission is to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV; through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

## **NATIONAL CENTER FOR LESBIAN RIGHTS**

NCLR is dedicated to advancing the civil and human rights of LGBTQ people and their families through litigation, legislation, policy, and public education.

[www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

## **NATIONAL CENTER FOR TRANSGENDER EQUALITY**

A national social justice organization devoted to ending discrimination and violence against transgender people through education and advocacy on national issues of importance to transgender people.

[www.transequality.org](http://www.transequality.org)

## **ORGANIZATION INTERSEX INTERNATIONAL USA (OII-USA)**

Advocates equality and human rights for intersex people, particularly the right to bodily integrity and self-determination.

[www.oii-usa.org](http://www.oii-usa.org)

## **PFLAG**

PFLAG is the first and largest national organization for LGBTQ+ people, their parents and families, and allies.

[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

## **SAFE SCHOOLS COALITION**

A public-private partnership, in support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, queer and questioning youth, working to help schools become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

[www.safeschoolscoalition.org](http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org)

## **SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT**

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project works, through legal services and trainings, to guarantee that all people are free to self-determine gender identity and expression, regardless of income or race, and without facing discrimination or violence.

[www.srlp.org](http://www.srlp.org)

## **TRANS YOUTH EQUALITY FOUNDATION**

A nonprofit foundation that advocates for transgender, gender nonconforming, and intersex youth ages 2-18.

[www.transyouthequality.org](http://www.transyouthequality.org)

## **TRANS YOUTH FAMILY ALLIES**

Trans Youth Family Allies empowers children and families by partnering with educators, service providers and communities, to develop supportive environments in which gender may be expressed and respected.

[www.imatyfa.org](http://www.imatyfa.org)

## **TRANSGENDER LAW CENTER**

Transgender Law Center works to change law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression.

[www.transgenderlawcenter.org](http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org)

## **THE TREVOR PROJECT**

The leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24.

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)