

# All Families Welcome: Inclusive Museum Spaces for LGBT Audiences



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**Assigned Sex:** The appropriate term to use when referring to the sex that a trans\* person was assigned at birth. An example: Baby Joe's sex at birth is male. Adolescent Joe grows to understand that she feels female on the inside. Although she does not have any surgery, she eventually chooses to take female hormones and present herself as Joanna. Joanna's assigned sex was male, but she is a trans-woman (or may simply identify as a woman).

**Gender Binary:** Refers to the social construct of gender as either male or female. This is an idea that discourages the fluidity of gender expression and marginalizes trans\* and gender non-conforming individuals.

**Gender Non-conforming:** Not an identity, per se, but refers to those who operate outside of typical gender norms.

**Heteronormativity:** An idea, often linked to homophobia, which refers to the demands and constraints of a society which gives privileged status to heterosexual men and women.

**LGBT:** An initialism for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. People commonly include other letters as well, but LGBT is usually perfectly acceptable. Two more letters that are commonly included are 'Q' for Queer (see definition below) or Questioning and 'I' for Intersex (person born with sex characteristics that are not distinctly male or female).

**Microaggression:** As defined in American Psychologist, "Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative [...] slights and insults toward people."

**Preferred Pronouns:** The personal pronouns that someone prefers to be identified as. Most often, these pronouns are *he*, *him*, and *his* or *she*, *her*, and *hers*. It is not uncommon for trans\* or gender non-conforming individuals to prefer gender-neutral pronouns such as *they*, *their*, and *theirs*. "It" will almost invariably never be a preferred pronoun.

**Queer:** Once a pejorative term to describe LGBT people, many have reclaimed the word as a deliberately ambiguous way to describe any sexual or gender minorities.

**Restorative Justice:** A policy to address harassment and bullying which recognizes the needs of the target, the aggressor, and the community. Where Zero-Tolerance Bullying Policies seek only to discipline the aggressor, this policy instead seeks to resolve root causes among everyone involved.

**Transgender:** Refers to someone who does not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. The shortened term 'Trans\*' may be used as an umbrella term to indicate any identity outside of the gender binary, including transgender. Alternately, 'cisgender' describes someone who does identify as their assigned sex. Note that 'transgendered' is an inappropriate way to describe someone. It is also important to note that 'trans\*' and 'transgender' are not a reflection of one's sexuality.

**Windows and Mirrors:** In education, this concept refers to providing students with educational content through which they are exposed to new cultures, lifestyles, and perspectives (windows) and see themselves reflected (mirrors).

## Guest Services

- Are non-discrimination and bullying prevention policies visible and enforced?
- Are floor staff trained on appropriate language, including LGBT terminology?
- Do non-verbal expressions indicate to LGBT audiences that they are welcome?
- Are children encouraged to try all age-appropriate play, regardless of gender?
- Can families easily provide feedback regarding their museum experience?
- Have floor staff been made aware of LGBT community resources?

## Administrative

- Are non-discrimination policies inclusive and enumerated?
- Has your organization convened an LGBT advisory council?
- Have you been on a facility walk-through with relevant staff and advisors?
- Are language and symbols on signs and paperwork inclusive?
- Are gender-inclusive bathrooms easily accessible for all guests and staff?
- Do confidential outlets exist for staff to share workplace concerns?
- Have employees and guests been made aware of LGBT community resources?

## Marketing

- Do marketing materials include representations of diverse families?
- Do your advertising outlets reach LGBT communities?
- Does your online presence indicate an inclusive museum environment?
- Are there visual cues in the museum to indicate that the facility is a safe space?
- Is inclusive terminology used in ads and membership application forms?
- Do exhibit graphics feature individuals defying stereotypical gender roles?

## Education

- Are bullying prevention policies meaningfully and effectively enforced?
- Does educational programming include windows and mirrors?
- Are educators comfortable engaging with gender non-conforming students?
- Are educators able to self-check for heteronormative language and practices?
- Can students easily provide feedback regarding their museum experience?
- Have educators been made aware of resources to create LGBT-inclusive educational experiences?