

Why should we discuss LGBTIQ+ rights in schools?

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Pronouns: he/him

- Trained in Brazil as a general Psychologist (2004-2009)
- Worked training teachers and developing research in Gender, Sexuality, Diversity, and as a Lecturer in General Psychology
- Worked as an Educational Psychologist (2012-2018) at primary and secondary schools in Rio de Janeiro



Tarsila do Amaral: Abaporu, 1928

- Researching discourses of childhood, gender recognition, and trans rights for my PhD
- Teaching courses on Educational Psychology, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, International Education, and Research Methods
- Working in research projects about LGBTQ+ experiences in Brazil and the UK

This session aims to present some reasons to discuss LGBTQ+ rights in schools:

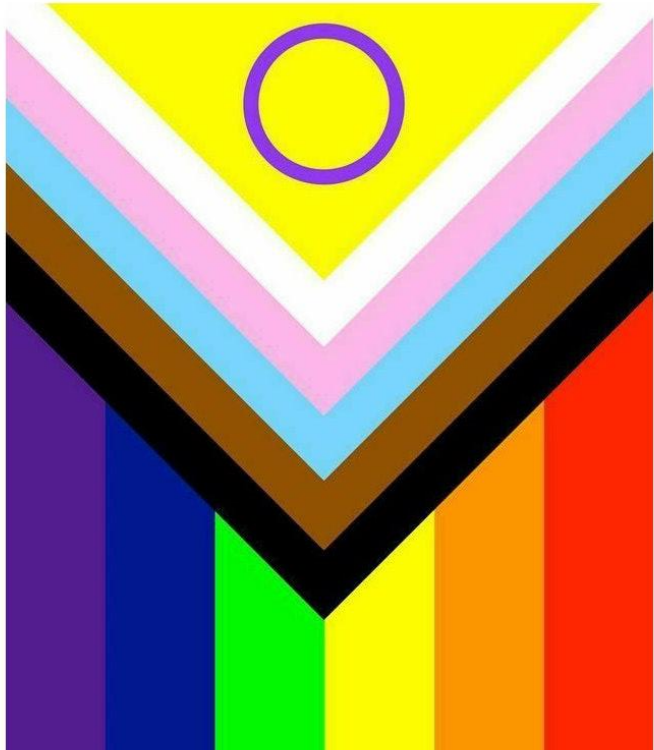
1, to reduce inequities

2, to improve the learning environment for all students

3, to address the historical debt of imposed silence in schools

Rationale

- Historical debt of **silence** about this topic to be addressed
- Promote **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion** (or EDI)
- Recognising that **everyone in our society** matters
- Improving **schools' environment** for meaningful learning

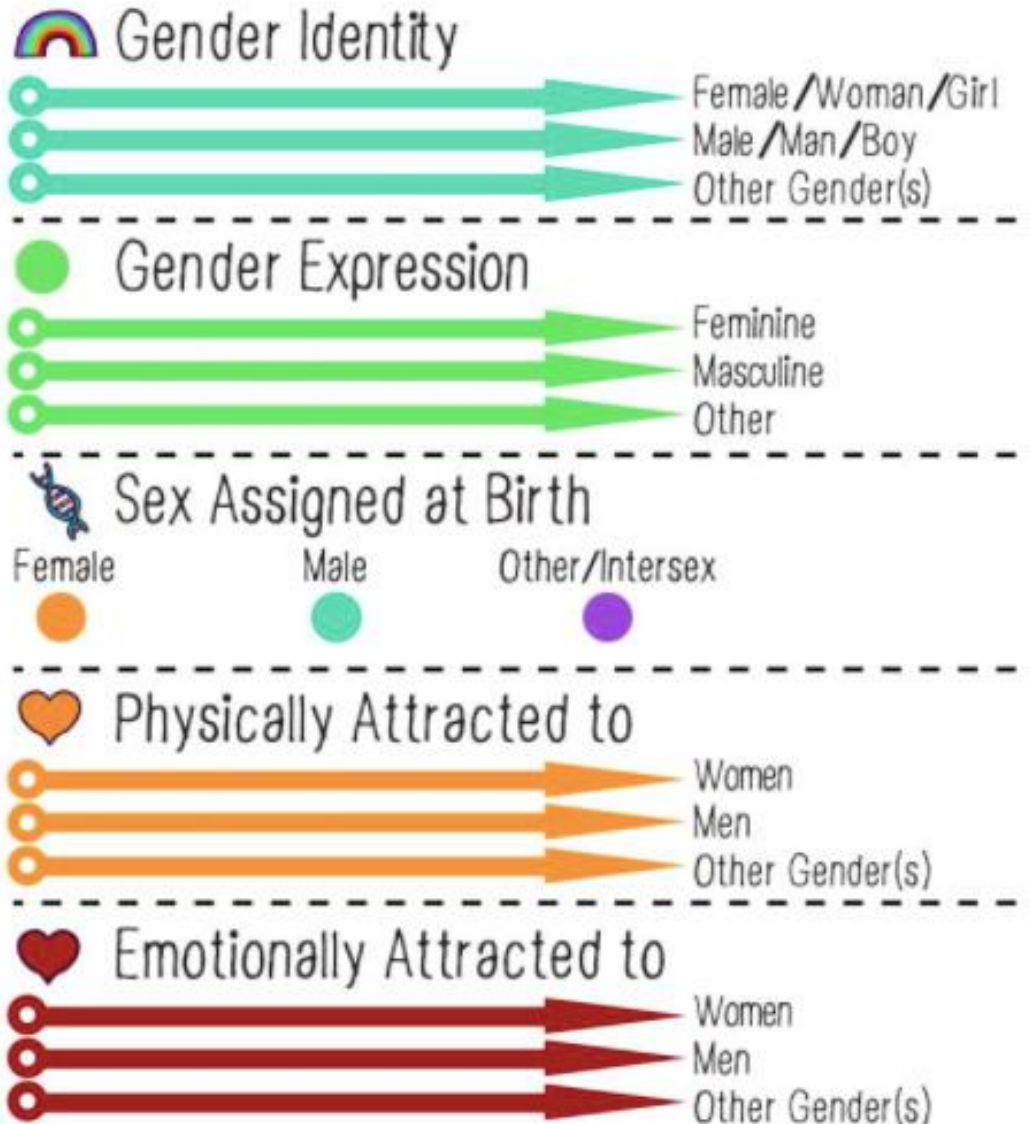
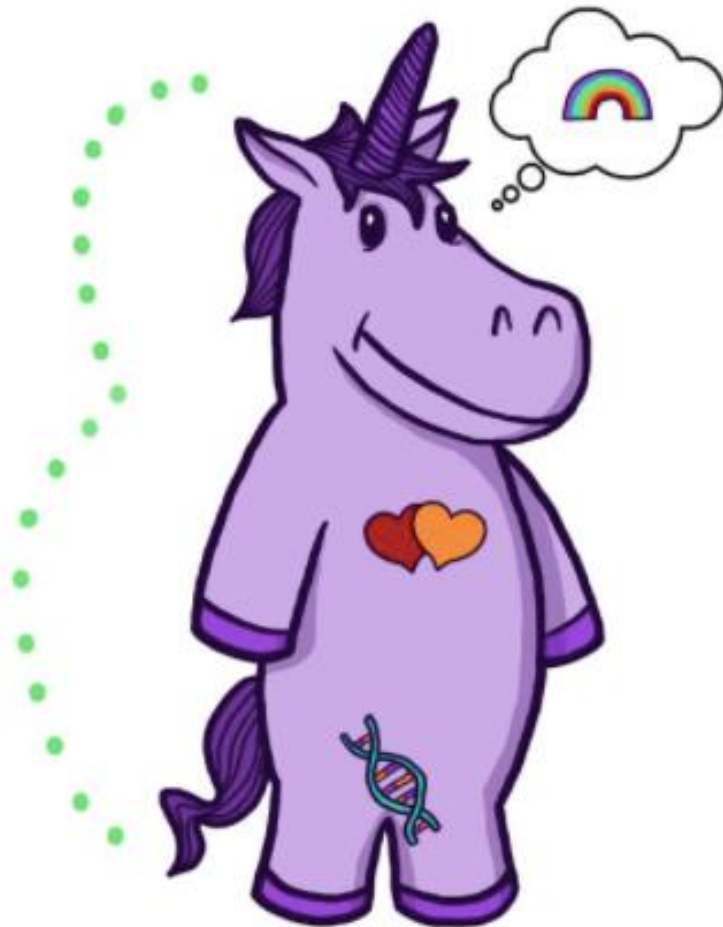


What does the acronym LGBTIQ+ stand for?

**Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans(gender), Intersex,
Queer/Questioning, and other expressions of gender
and sexuality different from expectations**

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



Some useful words here...

Agender
Cisgender
Transgender
Transsexual
Nonbinary
Bigender
And more...

Asexual
Heterosexual
Homosexual
Bisexual
Pansexual
A romantic
And more...

To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Gender and sex: what is the difference?

- Roughly, we can say gender is the system that split people in two categories (woman or man) with stable rules, excluding variations, transitions, and possibilities
- Based on gendered division, sex refers to embodied characteristics identified and assigned at the birth (also leaving behind some bodies, usually known as intersex)
- Sex and gender are considered just one thing, and many people actually follow those expectations. What about those who don't?

Gender Recognition Act (2004) Equality Act (2010)

- People can change their name and gender to follow how they live (following some procedures).
- Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic! If someone changed their name and/or gender in documents, that is a private matter and publicising it is a public offence.

(There are some very specific exceptions for legal reasons)

The background consists of a solid purple top section and a solid black bottom section. A white geometric shape, resembling a stylized mountain or a jagged line, is positioned at the boundary between the two colors.

Have you ever heard about LGBTQ+ rights when in school?

- Have you ever heard about LGBTIQ+ rights at your school?

“we expect all pupils to have been taught LGBT content at a timely point as part of this area of the curriculum”

Department for Education’s guidance on Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education, 2019

(Applies to England only)

“Available empirical evidence confirmed that school **children will not suffer** from participation in inclusive sexuality education. **On the contrary**, on the basis of the reviewed evidence, there are good reasons to expect that **the educational benefits will be overwhelmingly positive**, particularly for at-risk students belonging to a sexual minority”

(Gegenfurtner & Gebhardt, 2017: 217)

Why should we discuss it?

The National LGBT survey



In July 2017 the Government asked LGBT people to complete a survey about different parts of their lives.



More than 108,000 people completed the survey.



Trans respondents were much less happy with their lives than other respondents.



Most of the time, the most serious incidents did not get reported to anyone.



Hardly anyone said that they had had the chance to talk about sexual orientation and changing gender at school.



Many respondents who had been at school last year said they'd had a bad experience in the last 12 months.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730417/lgbt-survey-easy-read-lo-res_v2.pdf

What do other researchers say?

- “LGB&T young people experienced a **highly hostile environment within school**, with high levels of bullying, harassment and homophobic language due to their sexual orientation”

(Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf, 2016: 109)

- “**Very little is known about inequality in education** in colleges related to sexual orientation and gender identity.”

(Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf, 2016: 29)

- “**Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students continue to report more often than their heterosexual peers**” [in the USA] (Wright & Smith, 2013: 1)

“Heterosexism, transsexism and heteronormativity are forms of discrimination against LGB&T people: they **make invisible LGB&T people’s sexual orientation** and result in a failure to cater to needs that differ from those of non-LGB&T people (Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf, 2016: 15)

Silence and Section 28



Section 28: What was it and how did it affect LGBT+ people?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/cacc0b40-c3a4-473b-86cc-11863c0b3f30>

- Law in effect from 1988 until 2003 (2000 in Scotland)
- It prohibited public authorities to “*promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality*” as well as “*teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship*”
- Proposed and approved in response to actions for the wellbeing of young homosexual people led by local governments, schools, charities, and social movements in the 1980s.

Silence and Section 28

- The educational system is still embedded with the Section 28 's history: even years after its repeal, it still has effects to justify teacher's silence on this subject.
- Section 28's repeal was not enough to change the imaginary of teachers and schools

(Greenland & Nunney, 2008)



Section 28: What was it and how did it affect LGBT+ people?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/cacc0b40-c3a4-473b-86cc-11863c0b3f30>

What do young trans and non-binary people have to say?



We have much work to do for making schools better places for everyone



- Schools with more diversity might have **better scores**
- Reducing conflicts and discrimination might **improve all students' learning**
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion are some of the criteria for **assessing schools**
- Using chosen name and pronouns shows recognition to that person, **valued as who they are**, reducing dropping-out
- LGBTQ+ rights are connected with other struggles for **inclusion and social justice**, such as anti-racism, anti-ableism, feminism, and decolonisation

And we are not alone!

- “administrators could work toward improving general school climate and safety for all by enforcing the policies that are already in place **to protect LGBT staff and students.**” (Wright & Smith, 2015: 405)
- “Our results suggest that a hostile school climate has serious ramifications for LGBT students, but they also highlight the **important role that institutional supports can play in making schools safer for these students.**” (Kosciw et al, 2012: 60-61)
- The main focus, therefore, needs to be on **creating a campus climate of zero tolerance of all forms of prejudice** (including homophobia).” (Ellis, 2008: 736)
- “initiatives against homophobia in schools need to be further developed and be part of a wider agenda to **tackle homophobic violence and discrimination**” (Mountian, 2014: 17)

Group activity

- Remember (or imagine) a situation in a school you work with recurrent episodes of discrimination and lacking discussions in LGBTIQ+ rights.
- You can suggest **one action** to your school promote equality, diversity, and inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people, as part of your activities. What would you recommend?

Keep in mind:

What kind of action would you prioritise?

How to avoid reinforcing stereotypes?

How schools would have to change?

How could you help to make a difference?

What is your expertise/discipline?

Final recap...

- We learned (or reviewed) some important ideas for this discussion, such as **gender**, **sexual orientation**, and **LGBTIQ+**
- We studied some reasons to discuss LGBTIQ+ rights in schools
 - **To address historical debt** of silence (Section 28)
 - **To reduce discrimination** and create a better place for everyone
 - **To follow** the Department for Education's **guidance** on Relationships Education, RSE, and Health Education from 2019 and **Equality Act** from 2010

You can find local groups and more information for LGBTIQ+ young people via The Proud Trust website:

☆ FIND YOUR LOCAL GROUP ☆

SEARCH VIA POSTCODE OR STREET NAME

within 10 miles

Filter:

☐ LGBT+ Youth Group

☐ Trans Specific Youth Group

☐ BAME LGBT+ Youth Group

FIND A YOUTH GROUP >>>

YOUR NEAREST YOUTH GROUPS ARE...

Under One Roof (75.3 mi)
Contact: Debs Hickling-Walker
07415104559
debswalker@trinityyouth.org.uk

T & Coffee (77.3 mi)

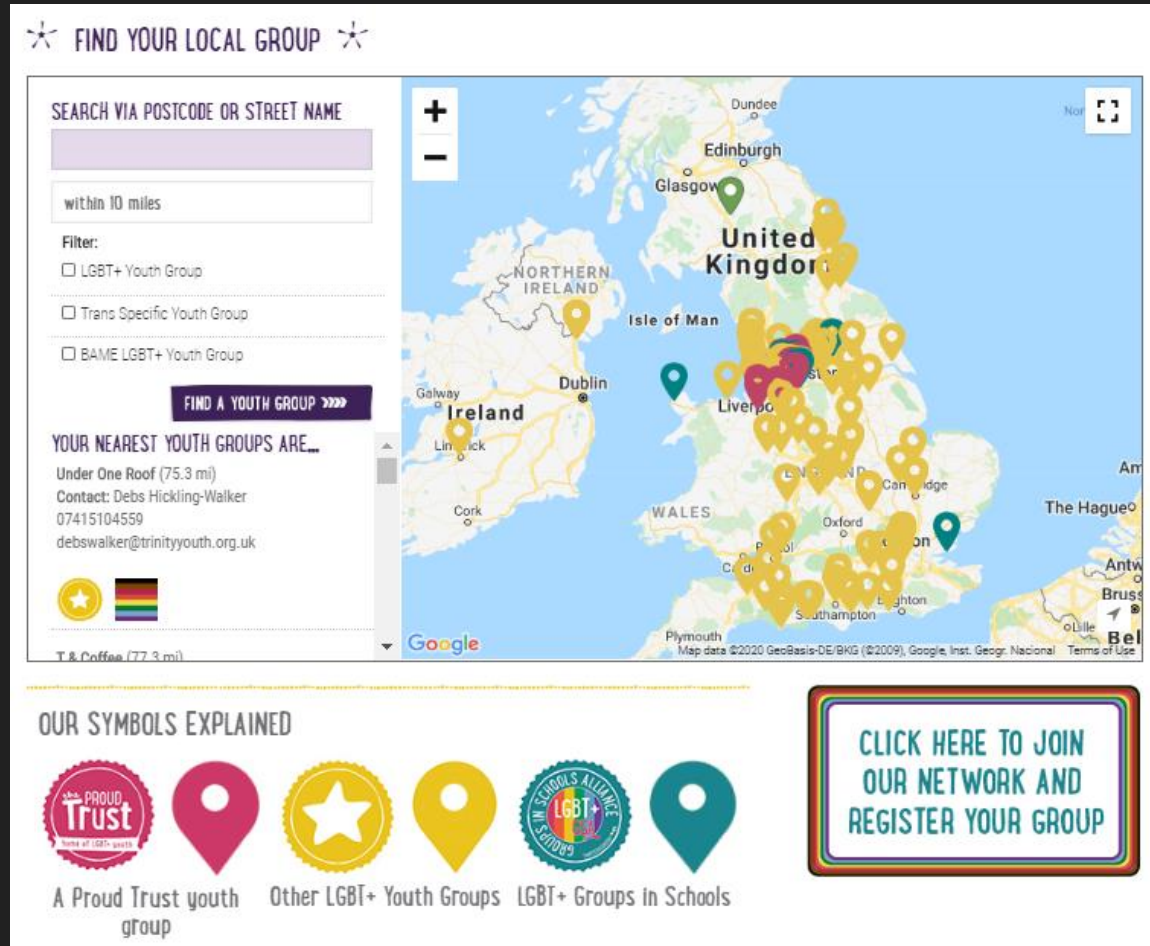
OUR SYMBOLS EXPLAINED

A Proud Trust youth group

Other LGBT+ Youth Groups

LGBT+ Groups in Schools

CLICK HERE TO JOIN OUR NETWORK AND REGISTER YOUR GROUP



www.theproudsttrust.org

<https://www.theproudsttrust.org/schools-and-training/secondary-resources/assembly-resources/>



Some further resources...

- <https://www.theprouddtrust.org/schools-and-training/>
- <https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk/>
- <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/schools-colleges>
- <https://www.42ndstreet.org.uk/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

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And some academic references

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