



Trans Affirming Network Training

Hosted by the MRFA Staff & Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee

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Session Notes

Background on Skipping Stone

Skipping Stone creates safe spaces by bringing together organizations and businesses that are welcoming, respectful and share set of values around this work. Members can reach out to skipping stone with questions. There will be sessions available to us and information sessions moving forward.

Actions to support people transitioning

Validate, Normalize, and Celebrate

"This is about progress not perfection"

- Stop and acknowledge the big step that they are taking in transitioning and celebrate what they are doing
- Assessment with the individual
- Really stress empowerment so they can take the lead in how they Transition
- Identification of goals
- Explore available options
- Bidirectional sharing of resources – this can be a huge expenditure of emotional resources
- Consider our personal role in supporting people

Themes:

We may be hesitant to not get things wrong but the important thing is to commit to a lot of small actions done consistently to make a positive difference and make a big impact. Inaction continues to perpetuate the harm. We will move forward with the principle of progress.

- Autonomy
- Empowerment
- Involvement
- Transparency
- Reliability - Be authentic and meaningful in this process. Write things down and make copies to convince dedication to an agreed process
- Being Gender affirming – respecting and validating

"I see you" – Gender euphoria

Nine principles need to be implemented at all times as a member of the Trans Affirming Network.

1. *Unless we are explicitly included the assumption is that we are excluded.* Being explicitly welcoming helps trans folks know that they are welcome and safe.
 - *The Association has put up pride and trans pride flags as a visible indication of welcome*
2. Check our Bias. Change the world. Challenge gender assumptions in small and achievable ways. *Introduce with pronouns consistently.* This can be done internally and in small ways so that it becomes a part of the way we live and how we engage with others.
 - *The Association has incorporated pronouns in meeting process and ongoing training is being done to improve consistency of use*
 - *A space for pronouns will be provided at events with nametags*
3. Practice proper pronoun use. Offer your pronouns first and this creates space for others to share their pronouns. If you do not know someone's pronouns you default to they/them. Faculty can create space by letting students know in an email or in some way that students can let faculty know their pronouns. *This can be one of a few questions: what name do you prefer, what pronouns do you use, how do you prefer that I use your pronouns (in public/private) –* include it with other questions so you are not only asking about this one thing
4. *Move beyond the Binary – use gender neutral language (e.g. folks not “guys”).* This can soften the language we use to trans feminine instead of trans woman. If we are speaking globally about all women we can drop the trans. It can be open to all that are open, exploring, questioning. Flag it for people when there will be problematic/outdated/binary language that is used in a historical context
 - *The Association has developed a cyclical policy review process. In this process all Association policies and Bylaws will be reviewed to ensure gender neutral language is used throughout. (Note – this review has been done before but a second check will ensure that nothing is missed)*
5. Champion Inclusive facilities – being intentional and proactive in recognizing the concerns / lack. *Recognize that the space is not perfect and not set up for trans people but showing that you are on their side*
 - *The Association has advocated and supported faculty in their advocacy efforts to enhance the provision of gender neutral restrooms on campus*
6. Being proactive in setting policies and providing for workplace transition supports. Having these things in advance is important so that people do not need to apply for exceptional accommodations. *This way we can create space and make people feel included and safe without feeling the need to seek accommodations*
7. Place priority on protecting privacy. Minimize the emotional labour for trans folks. *How to place individuals needs ahead of their identities. We need to consider what is the least amount of information we need from a person in order to complete the required process.* If we need

information that may be uncomfortable providing – we need to prioritize the individual by asking. Ask first “what is your name” then “what is your name as it appears on your Social insurance card” “What is the name that appears on your birth certificate”. In our census *we need to contextualize why the data is needed and as much as possible make the provision of this data voluntary.*

8. Be accountable for our mistakes. EDI work will get messy and we need to do our best. *Be comfortable with out discomfort: take accountability and correct yourself. 4-step apology: 1 when I did this 2 it made you feel like this 3. I am sorry and 4. Here is what I am going to do.*
9. Embrace the chances to do better. When people tell us, we are doing something wrong this is a sign of trust in us that they think we can do better that we are willing to make change. *It is a gift when people share our mistakes with us and the creation of a bridge of trust.*