Gender Identity Inclusion Practices: Things We are Learning at NOLS

Shannon Rochelle
NOLS Research Manager
PRESENTATION GOALS

share our learning
continue learning
HISTORY
MISSION
TO BE THE LEADING SOURCE AND TEACHER OF
WILDERNESS SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP THAT SERVE
PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

VALUES
WILDERNESS
EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP
SAFETY
COMMUNITY
EXCELLENCE

THE LEADER SINCE 1965
NOLS.EDU
THE NEED FOR THIS PROJECT
- BRING TOGETHER SYSTEMS CREATED IN ISOLATION
- ADDRESS ISSUES THAT WERE BIGGER THAN ONE DEPARTMENT
THANK YOU

- Holly Barrass, Colorado Mountain Club
- Emi Birch, NOLS
- Kristen Brown, NOLS
- Susie Childs, Winterline
- Kim Cooper, The Berkshire School
- Jesi Crawford, NOLS
- Rick Curtis, Princeton University
- Dave Dennis, Rustic Pathways
- Paul Dreyer, Avid4Adventure
- Todd Duncan, Sierra Club
- Debra East, NOLS
- Mark Ginn, The Tatnall School
- Paula Guenther, US Forest Service
- Heather Hall, The Northwest School
- J Hamel, NOLS
- Tim Hare, Where There Be Dragons
- Reviewer: Joel Baum, Gender Spectrum
- Asher Hauck, NOLS
- Alison Hudson, NOLS
- Jeremy Jostad, U of Eastern Washington
- Emily Ledingham, NOLS
- Katie Baum Mettenbrink, NOLS
- Alex Myers, Phillips Exeter Academy
- Jesse Quillian, NOLS
- Jo Rolls, U of Utah School of Medicine
- Kevin Sadler, NOLS
- Jen Sall, NOLS
- Jay Satz, Northwest Youth Corps
- Steve Smith, NOLS
- Shana Tarter, NOLS
- Lindsay Yost, NOLS
- Tom Zimmer, Wyoming Catholic College
- Reviewer: Elyse Rylander, Avarna Group
METHODS

- Background information
- Interview NOLS staff and students
- Interview staff from other organizations
- Summary report
- Report review
- Information sharing

The iterative process continues.
RESULTS

- Facilities
- How We Present Ourselves to the World
- Organizational Culture
FIND EVERY INSTANCE WHERE WE SORT OR ORGANIZE BY GENDER
AND ASK WHY
GENDER NEUTRAL RESTROOM
BAÑO PARA TODA PERSONA
TOILETS and SHOWERS
DORMS and HOTEL ROOMS
STOP AND DISCUSS FACILITIES
HOW WE PRESENT OURSELVES TO THE WORLD

Marketing, Paperwork, and Information Technology
The Biggest Risk in Life is Not Taking One

ARE YOU READY?

Marketing
HEALTH FORM

For NOLS Office Use Only

☐ Initial Review OK
☐ Detailed Review OK

☐ Check Further

Date ___/___/___
AO Initials _________

Student’s Name ____________________________

Course Code ____________________________

Application ID# ____________________________

Daytime or Temporary Phone (circle one)

(_____) ____________________________

Permanant Phone

(_____) ____________________________

Sex _______ Age ________ NOLS Grad ☐ Non-Grad ☐

Person to Notify in Case of Emergency (Required for all applicants)

Name: ____________________________ Phone: Day (_____) ________ Eve. (___)__________

Address:

_________________________ ____________________________ ____________________________

Street City State Zip

Relationship to applicant: ☐ parent ☐ spouse ☐ other relative ☐ friend ☐ guardian ☐ employer ☐ partner

Dietary Needs ☐ vegetarian ☐ food allergies ____________________________
Information Technology
More Name Fields

* Birth date

Date format: mm/dd/yyyy

* Gender  Why do we ask for this information?

- Male
- Female

- Prefer to Self Identify

Additional Information (Optional)

Examples include but are not limited to agender, gender fluid, non-binary, trans female. Please also feel free to share your pronouns. (50 characters max)
Considerations

- Why are we asking?
- Female/Male vs Woman/Man?
- Open-ended question?
- Drop down menu?
- Othering
- Tell us whatever you want
More Name Fields

* Birth date

Date format: mm/dd/yyyy

* Gender

- Male
- Female

Why do we ask for this information?

Prefer to Self Identify

Additional Information (Optional)

Examples include but are not limited to age, gender, gender fluid, non-binary, and transgender. Please also feel free to share your pronouns. (50 characters max)
Why do we ask for gender information?

NOLS is committed to pursuing gender-based diversity goals in our educational offerings. We welcome students of all genders and ask for gender information in the application process to open conversations that will ultimately contribute to the positive learning environment for all NOLS students.

Examples of when knowing a student’s gender is important for purposes of safety or engagement include:

- We use gender-based sleeping arrangements on many courses, and our goal is to make people of all genders as comfortable as possible.
- Privacy, a concern for all genders, may pose greater concern for transgender and non-binary students, so we seek to inform about situations where strict privacy is not possible, for example:
  1. Expedition courses in grizzly bear country require that students be in groups of four for safety, even when attending to daily toileting needs;
  2. Wilderness medicine patient assessments are conducted by fellow students learning professional touch while practicing identifying injury; and
  3. Safety equipment for some expedition skills can be more revealing than standard outdoor clothing (harnesses used in climbing and mountaineering and wetsuits used for some water-based courses).

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to customer_service@nols.edu. You’ll hear back from someone who can answer your questions and will happily discuss any of your concerns.
Changing Personal Information
Database Structure

ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Personal (Edit)
Jamie Smith
DOB: Sept. 12, 1988
White
Self-identified: Gender questioning
STOP AND DISCUSS
HOW WE PRESENT OURSELVES TO THE WORLD
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

WHERE DOES GENDER PLAY A PART IN COURSE ACTIVITIES OR THE NOLS COMMUNITY?
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

1. Systems and culture we have been unable to change
2. Systems and culture where there is flexibility
3. Systems and culture that are changeable/have been changed
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

1) IDENTIFY systems and culture we have been unable to change

- Physical risk—international laws and customs
- Privacy and information-sharing within NOLS
- Activity-specific privacy compromises—patient assessment, bear protocol, wetsuits, harnesses, mountaineering rope teams
Travel Advisory
September 27, 2019

Tanzania - Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution

Exercise increased caution in Tanzania due to crime, terrorism, health issues, and targeting of LGBTI persons.
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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- Physical risk—international laws and customs
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- Privacy and information-sharing within NOLS

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2) IDENTIFY where standard practices can be flexible: ASK questions and adjust systems to meet student needs

- Identity on course and at home
- Binders
- Hormones
- Single gender sleeping spaces
Gender-based tent groups and dorms
3) IDENTIFY AND CHANGE the systems and culture we are able to change

- Informal education—conversation, design and sharing of systems among employees
- Formal training—cultural competency seminar, instructor briefings, eventual school wide training
INCLUSIVE COURSE CULTURE

IDEAS FOR INSTRUCTORS

- **Language** and **rainbows**—“cisgender,” “queer”

- **Privacy considerations**—group norms for urinating, changing clothes, tent spaces

- **Inclusion activities**—opportunities to disclose without pressure, acknowledge privilege of cis identities

The Genderbread Person

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex

Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation
IDENTIFY AND CHANGE the systems and culture we are able to change

SOME RECENT SPECIFIC CHANGES

- Pronoun sharing practices
- Non-gendered hygiene presentation
- Gendered language
- Wilderness medicine curriculum
- How we talk about clothing
STOP AND DISCUSS
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
ORGANIZATIONAL PHILOSOPHY QUESTIONS

Why do we, as outdoor and classroom educators, need to know a person’s gender or sex?

Does your organization have diversity goals? What are they? How were they chosen? Are they still relevant?

Does your organization offer gender-related (women’s, girls’, and LGBTQ+) affinity spaces or courses? What are the goals? Who are they designed for?

Do single gender sleeping spaces really make a difference in sexual misconduct? Are there other feasible options?

Is social justice part of your organization’s mission? In what way? How does that play out in your activities?
START BY ASKING: WHERE DO WE SORT BY GENDER? WHY?

WRAP UP

EXAMINE THREE ORGANIZATIONAL AREAS
FACILITIES
PRESENTATION (MARKETING, PAPERWORK, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE NEEDS
TIME COMMITMENTS
FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS
ORGANIZATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO LEARN AND DO
WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO TO MOVE YOUR ORGANIZATION TOWARD BEING A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE OF ALL GENDERS CAN SAY “THIS WAS CREATED WITH ME IN MIND”?
THANK YOU AGAIN!

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- Joel Baum, Gender Spectrum
- Emi Birch
- Kristen Brown
- Susie Childs, Winterline
- Sydney Clark
- Kim Cooper, The Berkshire School
- Jesi Crawford
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- Justin Forrest Parks
- Jesse Quillian
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- Kevin Sadler
- Jen Sall
- Jay Satz, Northwest Youth Corps
- Steve Smith
- Shana Tarter
- Liz Tuohy
- Lindsay Yost
- Tom Zimmer, Wyoming Catholic College
THANK YOU for sharing your ideas today!

If you have thoughts you’d like to share later, I’d really appreciate hearing from you.

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What privacy compromises does your organization make in the name of managing physical risk (examples at NOLS are maintaining groups of four at all times in grizzly country and urinating on rope teams while glacier mountaineering)? Are those privacy compromises truly necessary?