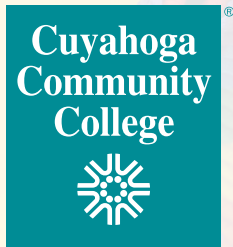


SAFE ZONE ALLY RESOURCE MANUAL



REVISED DECEMBER 2023

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Safe Zone and Lambda GSA History

As told by Jim Buccini, founding member and first president of Lambda

Lambda got its start in spring 2004. I had been attending Tri-C's Western Campus for several semesters and was aware of other schools that had Safe Zone programs and Gay-Straight Alliances. I had not felt particularly unsafe on campus, but I was still aware that there was no outward and visible sign of support for LGBT students at Tri-C.

Passing by Dr. Nahla Harik-Williams' office one day, I noticed she had a Safe Zone sign hanging above her desk. Having identified her as an LGBT ally, I approached her and proposed the idea of starting a student organization and a Safe Zone program on the Western Campus. We started to talk with other students and eventually chartered what was then the Gay-Straight Alliance, naming it Lambda — a Greek letter that symbolizes “the light of knowledge in the darkness of ignorance.”

Our chartering officers were myself as president; the late Faith Constantine as vice president; Tamara Lentini as secretary; and Hector Huertes as treasurer. One of Lambda's top priorities was to establish a Safe Zone program and invite faculty and staff to identify as LGBT allies — safe people to talk to on campus. We modeled our program after those at Case Western Reserve University and Baldwin-Wallace College. Students at both institutions were instrumental in helping us get our program started.

The first Safe Zone Allies at Tri-C were counselors and faculty advisors. A training session at Faculty Convocation packed the room. Other successful efforts included working with Phi Theta Kappa to bring the AIDS Memorial Quilt to the Western Campus; being sponsored at the Cleveland Human Rights Campaign banquet; and winning several awards through Tri-C Student Government and Student Life.

I am delighted to know that Lambda continues to be a strong student organization and that Safe Zone has become a College-wide program spearheaded by faculty, staff and administration. Lambda and Safe Zone continue to be two of my proudest accomplishments, and I am truly touched that they live on.

Lambda Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA)

Lambda GSA is a Tri-C student organization that welcomes everyone who supports the group's mission. The GSA is instrumental in creating and facilitating Safe Zone trainings and materials. Check with your Student Life office for information on group activities at your campus.

Mission

- To educate others and ourselves on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and straight ally issues;
- To work with other campus groups toward eliminating intolerance and prejudice;
- To create an accepting environment in our school and community;
- To be a safe place where everyone can feel comfortable and supported; and
- To foster healthy social interactions, bonding and understanding within our group and the greater community.

Visit Lambda's website at www.tri-c.edu/lambdagsa for advisor contact information, meeting updates, upcoming events, resources, group archives and more.

Cuyahoga Community College's Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment Policy

At Cuyahoga Community College, we are fortunate to have a true mosaic of people who contribute daily to create a dynamic and rewarding learning and working environment. Tri-C stands with the belief that diversity enriches not only the institution but society as a whole, and is committed to appreciating diverse perspectives and valuing the collective differences and similarities that make us who we are.

Discrimination against any individual based upon age, ancestry, color, disability, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, pregnancy, veteran status or genetic information is prohibited.

Any employee, student or other person who wishes to report discrimination or harassment based on any of the aforementioned protected classes should contact the College's Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Cuyahoga Community College
2500 E. 22nd St.
Cleveland, OH 44115

216-987-0204
View full Tri-C policy (3354:1-42-01)



Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. This includes protection from sexual harassment."

The Cuyahoga Community College Board of Trustees and administration strongly disapprove of any form of sexual harassment in the workplace or the classroom. All College management, supervisors, and faculty have an affirmative responsibility to discourage and eliminate conduct inconsistent with this policy.

Specific concerns or complaints regarding sexual harassment should be brought to the attention of the College's Title IX coordinator, vice president of Human Resources or vice president of Student Affairs. Prompt disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, student or other person found to have engaged in unlawful sexual harassment.

View full discrimination and harassment complaint procedure (3354:1-42-01.2)

Visit www.tri-c.edu/titleix/index.html for more information on Title IX.

Safe Zone Poster

The Safe Zone poster is updated annually and displayed College-wide. The Safe Zone campus/location coordinators listed on the poster can answer basic Safe Zone questions and refer you to others for assistance as needed.

The most recent poster appears on the following page.



WHAT IS A SAFE ZONE?

A Safe Zone is a space in which everyone is respected and heard, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

The Safe Zone logo is a way to designate a “safe space.” People should feel comfortable discussing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) topics without fear of judgment in this space.

tri-c.edu/safezone

Questions? Contact your campus/location coordinator:

Brunswick University Center

Maureen Leff
216-987-5756
BUC 124A

District Office

Heidi Athey Nicholas
216-987-3422
Room 224

Eastern Campus

Cory Molner
216-987-2080
ESS 3420

Jerry Sue Thornton Center

Standish Stewart
216-987-4596
JSTC 229

Metropolitan Campus

Andy Sokolich
216-987-0227
MBA 213

Western Campus

Mark Jackson
216-987-5069
WLA B240

Westshore Campus and Hospitality Management Center

Kellee Ellis
216-987-3042
SHCS 141K

Collegewide Coordinators

Kellee Ellis
216-987-3042
SHCS 141K

Michael Flatt
216-987-5528
WLA B 235

Executive Director, Diversity and Inclusion

Magda Gómez
216-987-0204
District 327

Core Values and Purpose of a Safe Zone Ally

- Value learning accurate information, ending the system of oppression and creating a celebratory and diverse community.
- Recognize heterosexism as a form of oppression on par with racism, sexism, antisemitism, classism, ableism, etc.
- Appreciate that coming out is a process for everyone involved and that not every LGBTQ+ person will choose to come out.
- Understand the issues of difference and diversity and work to create a safe space in which feelings can be shared and discussed.
- Acknowledge that homophobia perpetuates heterosexism by limiting opportunities to talk freely and learn about LGBTQ+ people and issues.
- Accept our own learned beliefs (implicit bias) and take responsibility for them, rather than fault, in order to create change.

An effective ally:

- Stops offensive language.
- Stays updated on current events in the LGBTQ+ community.
- Interacts with and supports LGBTQ+ family, friends and coworkers.
- Knows where to find resources and referrals, and when to refer.
- Listens to understand, not to reply, judge or have all the answers.
- Understands their boundaries — is not an expert or a counselor.
- Respects confidentiality.
- Doesn't try to "fix" problems or change people.
- Never assumes sexual orientation or gender identity, using gender-neutral terms when possible.

Your only responsibility as a Safe Zone ally is to serve as a safe person and a resource. Some individuals may want to debate the value or purpose of the Safe Zone program or may challenge you about general LGBTQ+ issues. You are not expected to participate in debates of this nature. Please refer these individuals to Magda Gómez, director of Diversity and Inclusion, at 216-987-0204 or magda.gomez@tri-c.edu.



Creating a Safe Zone

Creating a Safe Zone is about responding to LGBTQ+ bias.

It doesn't take much to hurt someone. Stereotypes against LGBTQ+ folks will not go away if you ignore them. Heterosexist jabs against homosexuality will not "toughen you up" or help you prove your worth. Assumed harmless phrases like "That's so gay" are commonplace in society, but no one stops to think how words like "queer," "faggot," or "dyke" originated, or how they've transformed into verbal abuse.

There are things that anyone — student or employee, regardless of gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation — can do to prevent disparagement of the LGBTQ+ community:

- It's okay to use humor to break the ice, but too much could do more harm than good. What you might easily laugh off might just as easily traumatize someone else. Be mindful of your audience when you try to use humor.
- Assume nothing. Unless they've stated it outright, you have no right to assume someone's identity, orientation or pronouns. Asking "What pronouns do you use?" is OK. When and if they are ready to confide in you, they will. You're there to aid, not to overwhelm. Step back if the person you're speaking to seems nervous.
- Never encourage someone to come out before they're ready. When they've decided it's safe to come out to friends and/or family, they will. Many may never come out; some might even go so far as to deny themselves the truth of their sexual orientation and try to "reform" themselves to avoid persecution.
- Keep something LGBTQ+-related in your office. Even something small, like a button or a sticker in support of the community, will be noticed. Keep it where anyone who enters or peers into your office can see it. Having it in your office and in sight during a confidential discussion with an uncertain student or employee will help them relax. Of course, your Safe Zone sign, window cling and/or button are awesome choices!
- If bias or harassment occurs, address it — but never lose sight of the individual and their emotions surrounding the incident. "Are you all right?" or "Do you want to talk about it?" can mean a lot. If appropriate, remind them that what transpired (such as someone outing them) was not their fault and that they have nothing to be ashamed of. Refer the student to Counseling and refer/report the incident to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- If you encounter a situation that is quickly growing out of control (e.g., escalating verbal abuse or immediate threat of physical violence), **get help!** Never compromise your safety. Find someone you know will help you and call Campus Police at 216-987-4911. Afterward, debrief with a counselor or psychologist on campus.

Facts and Statistics

The statistics linked below are from the GLSEN 2017 National School Climate Survey. Many of these items are referenced in our Safe Zone training presentation. Topics include homophobic remarks/verbal harassment, physical harassment and victimization, sense of safety at school/academic impact, and discriminatory policies or practices at school.

The final sample consisted of 23,001 students between ages 13 and 21. Students came from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories. About two-thirds of the sample (67.5%) were white, a third (34.1%) were cisgender female, and 4 in 10 (41.6%) identified as gay or lesbian. The average age of students in the sample was 15.6 years. The largest number of students were in grades 9 through 11.

Executive summary (18 pages)

Full report (196 pages)

Why We Need LGBTQ+ Resources in Schools

According to GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey, the presence of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and Safe Zone Allies can create a more welcoming climate for LGBTQ+ students.

Students in schools with a GSA:

- Were less likely to hear the word “gay” used in a negative way often or frequently (62.7% vs. 78.5% of other students).
- Were less likely to hear homophobic remarks such as “fag” or “dyke” often or frequently (53.4% vs. 68.1%).
- Were less likely to hear negative remarks about gender expression often or frequently (57.7% vs. 67.5%).
- Were less likely to hear negative remarks about transgender people often or frequently (40.7% vs. 51.3%).
- Were more likely to report that school personnel intervened when hearing homophobic remarks (18.2% vs. 11.3% said that staff intervene most of the time or always).
- Were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation (51.7% vs. 67.3%).
- Were less likely to miss school due to safety concerns (28.7% vs. 41.8%).
- Experienced lower levels of victimization related to their sexual orientation and gender expression.
- Reported a greater number of supportive school staff and more accepting peers.
- Felt greater belonging to their school community.

Knowing there are caring school employees is important! Of those surveyed:

- 96.7% could identify at least one ally among school staff.
- 61% could identify at least six or more allies among school staff.
- 38.8% could identify 11 or more supportive school staff.
- 39.8% reported that their school administration was somewhat or very supportive of LGBTQ+ students.
- 51.9% noted seeing at least one Safe Space (Zone) sticker or poster at their school.

The Safe Zone logo is the easiest way to identify an ally. Some students have reported that they chose to attend Tri-C because they saw a Safe Zone sticker or poster. Many report feeling safer and more welcome on campus because they saw the logo displayed.

Only certified allies may display the logo. Training takes place multiple times each semester, at various locations. All employees and students are welcome to attend.

Visit www.tri-c.edu/safezone for training schedules and more information.

Strategies for Faculty, Staff and Administrators

According to GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey, the presence of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and Safe Zone Allies can create a more welcoming climate for LGBTQ+ students.

In general

- Support your LGBTQ+ colleagues.
- Include LGBTQ+ concerns when training peer leaders, Student Government, etc.
- Educate yourself on the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals and families.
- Support official College LGBTQ+ employee and student organizations and events.

In the classroom

You don't need to be an expert to bring LGBTQ+ issues into the classroom! Treat them as you would any other diversity issue.

- Start small — don't expect to overhaul your course in one semester.
- Identify LGBTQ+ contributions throughout the curriculum.
- Provide history of the oppression of many groups, including LGBTQ+ people. Heterosexism is intertwined with other forms of oppression, including racism and antisemitism.
- Discuss the power of words, labels and names and how they shape the way we view ourselves.
- Use the word heterosexual (or straight) to describe male-female relationships. This way, heterosexual behavior is seen less as the assumed standard.
- When discussing LGBTQ+ topics with a class, provide a list of definitions in advance so that they understand the vocabulary you'll be using and will be more likely to use proper terminology themselves.
- Assign novels written by LGBTQ+ authors (e.g., Gertrude Stein, Willa Cather) or that feature LGBTQ characters.
- Make the issue of sexual orientation relevant to your students. For example, ask for a show of hands from students who know someone close to them who is LGBTQ+.
- Submit a request to improve library holdings related to sexual diversity, and make an effort to keep such materials up to date.
- Bring openly LGBTQ+ folks as resources in classes or programs. Visit the Safe Zone website for references, or contact PFLAG Cleveland or the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland.

Strategies for Faculty, Staff and Administrators (Cont.)

Possible curriculum topics

- The “cause” of sexual orientation
- Models of sexual identity development
- Coming out
- Same-sex couples and parenting
- Effects of having an LGBTQ+ family member
- Sexual orientation development and adolescence

The University of Southern California LGBT Resources page has some great educational activities to consider.

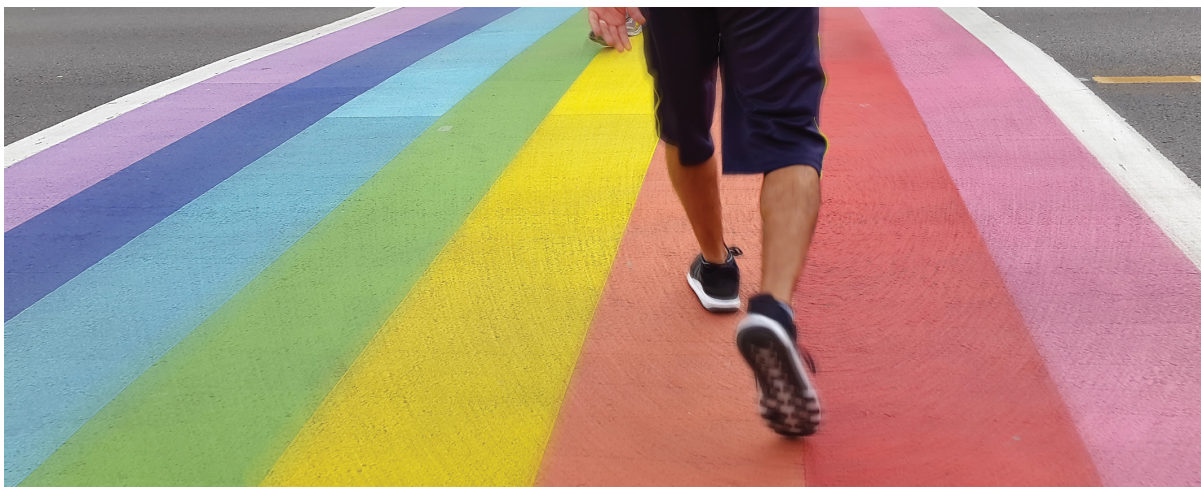
Dealing with resistance from students

College education requires students to learn information that may not be consistent with their own beliefs and values. However, learning these facts (supported by research and theory) is part of the educational process.

Information about sexual orientation is not an attack on anyone’s faith or background. No homophobic or transphobic behaviors should be tolerated in the classroom. In an academic environment, students must treat the material, their instructor and their classmates with sensitivity and respect.

It’s important to study issues related to sexual orientation because LGBTQ+ people and their experiences have been marginalized for so long. Just as we recognize the importance of women’s studies and African American studies, so should the experiences of LGBTQ+ people be recognized and studied.

Begin by discussing a set of guidelines for thinking about and addressing sexual orientation, including the ideas that sexual orientation occurs along a continuum; that all sexual orientations are normal; and that sexual orientation is not a choice and cannot change.



Models of Sexual Identity Development

Several different models attempt to explain the process individuals go through in developing an LGBTQ+ identity. We'll discuss a couple of them here. (Remember that models are generalizations that may not completely describe any one individual's experience.)

D'Augelli's Model (1994)

This model is based on a social constructionist view of sexual orientation. It uses steps instead of stages, recognizing the potential for both forward and backward movement between steps throughout a person's life.

Step One: Exiting Heterosexual Identity

Recognition that a person's sexual orientation is not heterosexual.

Step Two: Developing a Personal Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Identity Status

A person develops a personal lesbian-gay-bisexual identity status that is their own.

Step Three: Developing a Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Social Identity

A person develops and finds more community support and friendships.

Step Four: Becoming a Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Offspring

A person focuses on coming out with their biological family and dealing with the various issues and responses that result.

Step Five: Developing a Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Intimacy Status

In this step, many gay and lesbian couples are invisible — making it difficult for gays and lesbians to acknowledge their gay or lesbian relationships publicly.

Step Six: Entering a Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual Community

A person enters the lesbian-gay-bisexual community and becomes active in political and social settings.

In this model, key factors in the formation of identity are one's own perceptions and feelings about sexual identity, sexual behaviors and the meanings attached to them; the influences of family, peers, intimate partnerships and the meanings attached to them; and social norms, policies and laws.

Fassinger's Model (1996)

This stage-based model postulates that individuals go through both individual sexual identity development and group-membership identity development. Stages need not be passed concurrently.

Note: Though Fassinger's original study concerned lesbians only, further research validated this model for gay men in 1997.

Individual Sexual Identity Development	Group-Membership Identity Development
<p>Phase One: Awareness</p> <p>An awareness of sexual feelings and desires that are different from heterosexual norms.</p> <p>Unconscious beliefs about sexuality may be questioned.</p> <p>An individual in this phase may experience confusion, fear and bewilderment.</p>	<p>Phase One: Awareness</p> <p>An awareness that heterosexuality is not a universal norm.</p> <p>A realization that different sexual orientations exist may result in feelings of confusion and bewilderment.</p> <p>An individual is likely to understand that alternative sexual orientations exist, but not be aware of the oppression experienced by those groups.</p>
<p>Phase Two: Exploration</p> <p>Exploration of sexual feelings toward people (or one particular individual) of the same sex.</p> <p>Sexual behaviors not necessarily explored.</p> <p>Affective states are likely to include longing, excitement and wonder.</p>	<p>Phase Two: Exploration</p> <p>An individual searches to define their position in the lesbian/gay community and may experience a wide range of attitudes depending on the extent of internalized homophobia and the accessibility of information about the community.</p> <p>An increasing awareness of heterosexism may produce anger, anxiety and guilt, but exploring the existence of other lesbians/gays may also allow for excitement, curiosity and joy.</p>
<p>Phase Three: Deepening/Commitment</p> <p>A deepening of sexual and emotional knowledge of self, as well as a stronger commitment to self-fulfillment.</p> <p>This commitment is likely to affect the group identity process and may require addressing some group membership.</p>	<p>Phase Three: Deepening/Commitment</p> <p>A deeper understanding of the values and oppression of the lesbian/gay community.</p> <p>An increased awareness of the possible consequences of commitment to involvement in the lesbian/gay community.</p>

Models of Gender Identity Development

Gender identity is a personal conception of oneself on the gender continuum (male, female, agender). It's intimately related to the concept of the *gender role*, which is the outward manifestation of personality by observable factors (e.g., behavior and appearance).

In nearly all instances, gender identity is self-identified. For example, if a person considers himself a male and is most comfortable referring to his personal gender in masculine terms, then his gender identity is male.

All individuals possess a gender identity, and the process of becoming aware of it is an important part of psychosocial development. The recognition of gender identity is a process rather than a particular milestone, and variance from societal norms can cause distress to the individual as well as their family.

In order to fully assess a person's behavioral health, it's necessary to understand the varied pathways that lead to a mature and congruent gender role.

Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. How does society set gender norms? How are children socialized into society?
2. How does gender manifest itself in American culture?

Cass' Model (1979)

This is the most widely known and used model for the development of a lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender identity. Its six stages are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Stage	Task	Sample Statements
Identity Confusion	Begin to question whether one might be lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.	Could I be lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender?
Identity Comparison	Alienation from what has been familiar.	Maybe I am lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. I'm alone.
Identity Tolerance	Actively seek out other LGBTQ+ people and encounter positive support.	Where are other LGBTQ+ people?
Identity Acceptance	Prefer LGBTQ+ people over heterosexuals. Selective coming out.	I am lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. I can come out to some people.
Identity Pride	Pride in new identity and rejection of attempts to devalue LGBTQ+ people.	I am proud to be lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. I don't (and won't) pass for straight.
Identity Synthesis	Acceptance and integration of new identity along with acceptance and rejection of aspects of heterosexual culture. Typically out to most people.	I am an OK person who happens to be lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender.

Transgender Emergence: A Developmental Model (2004)

We all go through the gender identity development process. But for gender-variant people, the process is complicated by cultural expectations that conflict with their core sense of self.

This model is for transgender men and women coming to terms with their own gender variance and moving from an experience of denial and self-hatred to one of self-respect and gender congruence. The stages are fluid, not necessarily linear, and impacted by many other identity issues.

Stages	Help
<p>Stage One: Awareness</p> <p>A person begins to be aware that the source of their feeling different from others may be related to gender, often resulting in great distress.</p>	<p>An ally can help by:</p> <p>Listening and normalizing these experiences.</p>
<p>Stage Two: Seeking Information/Reaching Out</p> <p>A person may seek to gain education and support about gender variation.</p>	<p>An ally can help by:</p> <p>Facilitating access to accurate information and encouraging outreach.</p>
<p>Stage Three: Disclosure to Significant Others</p> <p>A person discloses their gender difference to significant others, including spouses, partners, family members and friends.</p>	<p>An ally can help by:</p> <p>Encouraging the person to prepare for these disclosures and suggesting professional support as appropriate.</p>
<p>Stage Four: Identity Exploration and Self-Labeling</p> <p>A person explores various transgender identities.</p>	<p>An ally can help by:</p> <p>Remaining open to various possible gender identities and expressions, supporting the person's articulation and comfort with a unique gendered identity.</p>
<p>Stage Five: Transition Issues/Possible Body Modification</p> <p>A person explores options for transition regarding identity, presentation and body modification.</p>	<p>An ally can help by:</p> <p>Remaining open to this process and advocating toward the person's manifestation.</p>
<p>Stage Six: Acceptance and Post-Transition Issues (Integration)</p> <p>A person is able to integrate and synthesize their transgender identity.</p>	<p>An ally can help by:</p> <p>Supporting transition-related issues including on-campus safety, resources and education.</p>

Intersex Overview

What does “intersex” mean?

An intersex individual is one who is born with variation or ambiguity of external genitalia, internal genitalia, gonads and/or sex chromosomes.

When these variances are apparent at birth, it can be difficult for doctors to identify a baby as male or female. Though these variances don't usually cause any medical or functional impairment, families are often counseled to conform to the binary gender construct by “assigning” a sex to the baby through surgical intervention.

It's common for individuals who have this surgery as infants to experience significant compromises in sexual function and well-being as adults.

Many cultures — particularly those that don't subscribe to a binary gender construct — see intersex individuals as simply another form of gender variation rather than considering them “defective.”

How common is intersexuality?

The number of intersex individuals is difficult to determine. The Intersex Society of North America reports that 1 in 100 babies have some sort of variation of the external genitalia but are not labeled as intersex. About 1 in 1,000 babies are born with ambiguous external genitalia and labeled as intersex.

Many intersex individuals do not have ambiguous external genitalia but have ambiguous or differing internal genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonadal sex or hormonal sex. Some of these individuals may not realize they are intersex until puberty, when typical adolescent changes don't follow a predictable course (e.g., an assumed biological female never menstruates or other unexpected physiological phenomena occur).

It's also possible for a person to never know they are intersex, or to find out in an unexpected way. For example, a woman track athlete tested positive for testosterone — not because she was taking the hormone, but because she had undescended testicles that were secreting it.

Why shouldn't I use the term “hermaphrodite”?

A *hermaphrodite* is “a creature that has both male and female reproductive organs,” which, for humans, only exists in myth. It's an outdated, improper way to refer to intersex individuals that's often experienced as derogatory. While the term has historically been used as medical terminology, most intersex individuals prefer to use a self-identified term, intersex or variation in sex development (VSD).

What are Disorders of Sex Development (DSD)?

Medical doctors use this diagnosis and its guidelines to describe atypical sexual development and intersex individuals. Many intersex people oppose its usage, as it serves to further pathologize their bodies rather than accept intersex as a natural variance to the male/female norm.

Visit the Organization Intersex International website for more on this topic.

Intersex Overview (Cont.)

How do intersex individuals define their gender identity?

Although medical diagnoses are often used to categorize intersex individuals, they are not gender identities. As always, identity is up to the individual. Some intersex individuals identify as a boy/man or a girl/woman. Some have a more ambiguous gender identity, such as androgyne, genderqueer, bi-gender, multigender, two-spirit or another self-identified gender.

The term *intersex* can be a self-identified label, like transgender, but may not be a gender identity by itself. Many intersex people do not identify as intersex — they may prefer to be viewed as a person with a variation in sex development (VSD) or may use another term.

There are many intersex conditions, all of which have unique attributes. As an ally, take the time to learn about specific variations. Consider the emotional impact of having non-normative biology and being forced to choose from two categories that don't necessarily fit a person's *felt sense*, or internal bodily awareness. Finally, respect that many intersex individuals have a single, binary gender identity and are not gender variant.

Asexual Overview

What does “asexual” mean?

Asexual individuals experience low or absent levels of sexual attraction and desire, are not drawn to people sexually and do not desire to act upon attraction to others in a sexual way.

Unlike celibacy, which is a choice to abstain from sexual activity, asexuality is an intrinsic part of a person's identity — just like other sexual orientations. However, that doesn't mean that asexual individuals have absolutely no interest in romantic or intimate relationships. While some asexuals are happier on their own, others are happiest with a close group of friends. Some may even form long-term partnerships with sexual people.

Asexual people have the same emotional needs as everybody else and are just as capable of forming intimate relationships. There is considerable diversity among the asexual community as far as needs and experiences often associated with sexuality, including relationships, attraction and arousal.

Often identifying as lesbian, gay, bi, queer or straight, many asexual people experience attraction but feel no desire to act on that attraction in a sexual way. Instead, one may identify as asexual but romantic, and may feel the need to get to know someone very closely without experiencing physical attraction.

On the other hand, sexual arousal may also occur regularly among asexual individuals even though they may not wish to express these feelings sexually.

Where can I learn more?

Visit asexuality.org or vaden.stanford.edu/health-resources/lgbtqia-health/asexuality to learn more about asexuality in the areas of attraction, arousal, relationships, identity and more.

Transgender Overview

What does “transgender” mean?

Transgender people are those whose gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth. *Trans* is often used as shorthand for transgender. When we’re born, a doctor usually says that we’re male or female based on what our bodies look like. Most people labeled male at birth turn out to identify as men, and most labeled female at birth grow up to be women. But some people’s gender identity — their innate knowledge of who they are — is different from what was initially expected when they were born. Most of these people describe themselves as transgender.



A transgender woman lives as a woman today, but was thought to be male at birth. A transgender man lives as a man today, but was thought to be female at birth.

Some transgender people identify as neither male nor female, or as a combination of male and female. People who aren’t entirely male or entirely female use terms such as *non-binary* or *genderqueer* to describe their gender identity.

Everyone, transgender or not, has a gender identity. Most people never think about their gender identity

because it matches their sex at birth. Being transgender means different things to different people. Like race, religion or other aspects of who people are, there’s no one way to be transgender. The best way to understand what being transgender is like is to talk with transgender people and listen to their stories.

Where can I learn more?

Visit transequality.org/about-transgender for transgender FAQ and information on supporting transgender individuals as well as those who identify as non-binary, or genderqueer.

Coming Out: Process and Considerations

The term *coming out* (of the closet) refers to the lifelong process of developing a positive LGBTQ+ identity. The coming out process begins when an LGBTQ+ person recognizes their own thoughts and feelings. Then, since people tend to assume everyone is heterosexual, LGBTQ+ persons must decide if, when and with whom to share these thoughts and feelings.

Coming out is a deeply personal process that differs from individual to individual.

Coming out can be a long and difficult struggle for many people. It often takes years of painful work to develop a positive LGBTQ+ identity. A person must confront bi/homo/transphobic attitudes and discriminatory practices along the way. Many also struggle with their own negative stereotypes and learned attitudes.

Before an LGBTQ+ person can fully accept and feel good about their identity, they must challenge these attitudes and turn any feelings of repulsion, pity or tolerance into appreciation and admiration. Once that happens, they may begin to decide what their coming out process will look like.

Coming out to friends and family is one of the most difficult parts of the process.

Because love in America is assumed to be straight, the discovery that one does not fit that mold can be frightening. Fear of rejection, labeling, discriminating and stereotypes can affect the person's self-image in a negative way. At times, they may feel as if their entire life is on the line.

Almost from birth, we are bombarded with images and sounds of the heterosexual experience on TV and in music, movies, books and fairy tales. Our families, friends, teachers and religious mentors encourage us to dream of living out the normal straight existence: marriage, kids, the white picket fence.

By the time we reach high school and college, many of our prejudices are ingrained. However, many aspects of our personal identities are only beginning to develop. At some point, the LGBTQ+ teen or young adult realizes they are different. This realization is the first step to coming out.

The LGBTQ+ youth may feel ashamed, frightened, confused or isolated at first, or they may rejoice at their newfound identity. Eventually, they come out a little further. They must decide whom to tell about this new discovery — who will accept them, and who might not.

Luckily, more and more schools are implementing stronger LGBTQ+ supports and resources such as Safe Zone programs, clubs and mentors.

Considerations

What's the fear?

- Rejection (loss of relationships)
- Gossip
- Harassment or abuse
- Being thrown out of the family and/or home
- Having their lover arrested
- Loss of financial support
- Losing their job
- Physical violence
- Vulnerability



Why come out to friends and/or family?

- End of the “hiding game”
- Feel closer to those people
- Be able to be “whole” around them
- Feel like they have integrity
- Make a statement that “gay is OK”

How might someone feel after a loved one comes out to them?

- Scared
- Shocked
- In disbelief
- Uncomfortable
- Unsure what to say and/or do
- Wondering why they chose to come out

What do people expect or want when they come out?

- Acceptance
- Support
- Understanding
- Comfort
- Closer friendships
- A hug and a smile
- Acknowledgment of their feelings



Why come out?

Sharing interpersonal relationships is important. For individuals who identify as heterosexual, publicly sharing these relationships is unquestioned and completely accepted. For individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, bi/homo/transphobia make publicly sharing their relationships difficult and, at times, dangerous. Though different for each individual, the coming out process can serve as a way to affirm feelings and personal relationships with loved ones and peers.

Outing

Outing refers to revealing someone else’s sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their consent. It’s important to remember that, although someone may confide their sexual orientation or gender identity to you, it’s their information to share with others if and when they choose to.

Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. What are some barriers to coming out?
2. How can Tri-C become an open place for LGBTQ+ students and employees to interact in the campus community without fear of rejection and/or isolation?
3. How can you ensure your workspace or classroom is LGBTQ+ friendly?

More Information

“Covering” by Kenji Yoshino (2002)
A Resource Guide to Coming Out (2014)

Helping Those Who Are Coming Out

When someone comes out to you ...

1. Know yourself and your stance.

Before you can help an LGBTQ+ individual, you must examine your own feelings about relationships and activity across the spectrum. Can you comfortably encourage a person to act on feelings that may be inconsistent with your own experience or orientation? How would you react if a family member or friend came out to you? It might be helpful to discuss these issues with an LGBTQ+ person.

2. Appreciate the person's trust.

Understand that they have likely spent some time thinking about whether or not to come out to you and that they're aware there may be risks involved.

3. Recognize that they're the same person they always were.

Understand that the LGBTQ+ individual is the same person you knew before.

4. Listen.

This is the best gift you can give. Listen and be present, without judging. Coming out is a long process. Chances are good that the person hasn't had an opportunity to talk to anyone about their issues while in the closet. They might have a lot to say. They may also approach you again to discuss the process and its challenges.

5. Be mindful of boundaries.

Don't overstep the boundaries of your relationship to the LGBTQ+ person. Be aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate in the context of your relationship. Some questions to keep in mind might be "What can I do to help?" and "Have I ever offended you unknowingly?"

6. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know everything.

Displaying a Safe Zone sticker doesn't make you an expert — and no one expects you to be one! Be prepared to refer the individual to campus and community resources as necessary.

When someone is considering coming out to others ...

1. Never advise the person to come out to others.

The choice to come out is their decision alone. Safety is also a consideration, as family or friends may not be supportive. The person could potentially lose housing, financial support, etc.

2. Reiterate your commitment to confidentiality.

The LGBTQ+ individual may not be ready to come out to others, or they may want to do so in their own time and own way. Reassure them that you will not out them.

3. Offer ongoing support.

Let them know that you are available for support if and when they decide to come out to others.

Names and Pronoun Usage

Always use a person's chosen name and pronouns, regardless of orientation or identity.

Often, transgender people can't afford a legal name change or are not yet old enough to change their name legally. They should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who lives by a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities or those who go by Jack rather than John or Kathy instead of Kathleen).

We also encourage you to ask all people **"What are your pronouns?"** or **"What pronouns do you use?"** Do not ask about/refer to "preferred" pronouns (just as you would not refer to sexual orientation as sexual preference).

You may even choose to include your own pronouns in your email signature and/or your social media profiles as a means of normalizing the sharing of pronouns.

Why are personal pronouns and gender identity important?

Gender identity describes an individual's personal sense of their gender, whether the same or different from their biological sex. Identifiers such as name, gender and personal pronouns are core factors in many individuals' sense of self. People may use different personal pronouns in various contexts. This includes using no pronouns or only using one's name. Below is a chart of some common pronouns and their pronunciations.

Subject	Object	Possessive
She	Her	Hers
He	Him	His
They	Them	Theirs
Xe (zhee)	Xem (zhem)	Xyrs (zheres)

Using Pronouns Correctly

All people — whether or not they are transgender, have taken hormones, had surgery or all/none of the above — should be referred to using their named pronouns.

If it's not possible to ask which pronouns a person uses, use "they."

- If you make a mistake, correct yourself. Going on as if it didn't happen is actually less respectful than making the correction. This also saves the misidentified person from having to correct an incorrect pronoun assumption that may have been witnessed by others.
- If someone else makes a mistake, correct them. It's polite to provide a correction, whether or not the misidentified person is present, in order to avoid future mistakes and to correct an incorrect pronoun assumption that may have been witnessed by others.
- If you aren't sure of a person's pronouns, ask. One way to do this is by sharing your own: "I use 'he, him, his' pronouns. I want to make sure I address you correctly. How do you like to be addressed?" This may seem strange, but a person who is often addressed incorrectly may see it as a sign of respect.
- When facilitating a group discussion, ask people to identify their pronouns during introductions. This allows everyone in the room a chance to self-identify and to get each other's pronouns right the first time. It also reduces the burden on anyone whose pronoun is often misidentified and may help them access the discussion more easily.

This Is Me

Tri-C allows students and employees to update their chosen name, personal pronouns and gender identity in *my Tri-C space*. See the flyer on the next page for instructions on updating your information, and visit www.tri-c.edu/thisisme to learn more.



This Is Me

Chosen Name, Personal Pronoun and Gender Identity FAQ

What is a chosen name?

A chosen name is a name that a person chooses to be identified by, apart from their legal name. Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) allows students and employees to use a chosen name.

Why are personal pronouns and gender identity important?

Identifiers such as name, gender and personal pronouns are core factors in many individuals' sense of self. In alignment with the College's goals and values as an inclusive institution, the newest update to the employee and student information forms include fields to indicate chosen name, pronouns and gender identity. Instructors, advisors and administrators will see these values on class rosters, advising rosters and other administrative pages.

People may use different personal pronouns in various contexts. This includes using no pronouns or only using one's name. Below is a chart of some common pronouns and their pronunciations.

Subject	Object	Possessive
She	Her	Hers
He	Him	His
They	Them	Theirs
Xe (zhee)	Xem (zhem)	Xyrs (zhere)

Gender identity describes an individual's personal sense of their gender, not their biological sex. A person's gender identity may or may not be the same as what they marked as gender on their application to the College.

For more information about personal pronouns, gender identity and why they matter, visit the resources tab at www.tri-c.edu/safezone.

How do I make these changes?

You may add your chosen name, personal pronouns and/or gender identity on *my Tri-C space*. Step-by-step instructions are available at www.tri-c.edu/thisisme.

If you are a student and you do not see your gender designation, please contact your campus Lambda Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) advisor. Contact information is available at www.tri-c.edu/lambdagsa. If you are an employee, please contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 216-987-0204.

Where will my chosen name be seen?

Your chosen name will appear in the following areas and will substitute for your primary/legal name:

- Advising rosters
- Class rosters
- Blackboard
- Grade rosters

Where will my chosen name not be seen?

All official Tri-C student record documents, such as enrollment verification, degree verification and transcripts, must use the student's legal name. Chosen names cannot be used on these documents. In order to use a different name on any of these forms, individuals must first petition for a name change through their county probate court. In addition, students in certain majors or programs that require off-campus placement sites (e.g. internships, externships and clinicals) will need to follow the chosen name policies and procedures of that placement site.

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Terminology

LGBTQ+ specific terminology is constantly evolving. Click the links below for the latest information. Links will be added/updated as new information becomes available.

An Ally's Guide to Terminology (2017)

Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists: Stylebook supplement on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender terminology

Spanish language version

Suggested Resources

Tri-C Resources

Campus Police — Call with concerns regarding hate crimes or any other issue that requires a police officer: 216-987-4325 (non-emergencies) or 216-987-4911 (emergencies).

Counseling and Psychological Services — Visit www.tri-c.edu/counseling to schedule an appointment. Before referring an LGBTQ+ student for personal counseling, consult the Certified Allies list at www.tri-c.edu/safezone to locate a counselor who has completed Safe Zone training.

Deans of Student Affairs — Deal with student issues, including conduct. To file a BIT report, visit www.tri-c.edu/concerns or go to *my Tri-C space*, click “Work Tools,” then “Student Concerns Report.”

Help Is Here — Connect to suicide prevention and mental health resources whenever and wherever you need them at www.tri-c.edu/helpishere or in the Help Is Here app.

Lambda Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) — www.tri-c.edu/safezone

Office of Diversity and Inclusion — Students and employees can file a discrimination complaint by contacting the College's Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 216-987-0204.

Safe Zone Allies — Faculty and staff who have completed Safe Zone Ally training and display the Safe Zone sign in their office or area. View a full list of allies at www.tri-c.edu/safezone. Our webpage also includes training dates, contacts, terminology, student organization information, local resources and much more!

Sexual Orientation and Gender Equality (SOGE) Council — An employee resource group that works to create a secure and inclusive community that embraces all forms of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. All certified Safe Zone Allies are invited to join. Visit www.tri-c.edu/soge to learn more.

Free National Hotlines/Helplines

- **LGBT National Hotline/Help Center**
888-843-4564
Check website for hours: glbthotline.org
- **LGBT National Youth Talkline**
800-246-PRIDE (7743)
For LGBTQ+ individuals age 25 and younger
- **LGBT Peer Chat**
Volunteers offer confidential, one-on-one peer support
- **LGBT National Senior Hotline**
888-234-SAGE (7243)
For LGBTQ+ seniors

Free National Hotlines/Helpines (Cont.)

- **Trans Lifeline**
877-565-8860
Check website for hours: translifeline.org
Staffed by transgender people for transgender people
- **The Trevor Project (24/7 LGBTQ+ specific suicide prevention and support)**
thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now
 - TrevorLifeline: 866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386)
 - TrevorChat: Confidential instant messaging available through website
 - TrevorText: Text “START” to 678678
- **Crisis Text Line**
Text “HOME” to 741741
- **Cuyahoga County Crisis Hotline**
216-623-6888
- **Geauga County Crisis Hotline**
888-285-5665
- **Medina County Crisis Hotline**
330-725-9195
- **Summit County Crisis Hotline**
330-434-9144
- **Suicide Hotlines**
800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
800-273-TALK (8255)
 - Veterans: Press 1
 - Hearing/Speech Impaired: 800-799-4TTY (4889)
 - Spanish Speakers: 888-628-9454



Cleveland-Area Resources

AIDS Taskforce	aidstaskforce.org	216-621-0766
Circle Health Services*	circlehealthservices.org	216-721-4010
Domestic Violence Center	dvcac.org	216-391-4357 (24/7)
Equality Ohio	equalityohio.org	614-224-0400
GLSEN Northeast Ohio	glsen.org/chapters/neo	216-556-0960
LGBT Center	lgbtcleveland.org	216-651-5428
PFLAG Cleveland	pflagcleveland.org	216-220-7030
Planned Parenthood	plannedparenthood.org/greater-ohio	216-851-1880
Plexus	thinkplexus.org	888-753-9879
TransFamily	transfamily.org	216-691-4357

*Formerly Free Clinic of Greater Cleveland

Reading/Viewing

Books About LGBTQ Life, Culture, History and Politics Everyone Should Read:

businessinsider.com/lgbt-queer-books-reading-list-2018-6

Essential Reading on the LGBTQ Journey:

hachettebookgroup.com/articles/essential-reading-on-the-lgbtq-journey

GLSEN Resources: glsen.org/learn/research/books-journals

It Gets Better Project: itgetsbetter.org

Queer Books for Teens: queerbooksforteens.com/resources

Social Justice Books LGBTQ+ Booklist: socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/lgbtq

Suggested Reading on Coming Out, Families and Other LGBT Topics:

pflagnyc.org/support/suggestedreading

The Trevor Project Book and Film Resources: thetrevorproject.org/pages/books-film

Tri-C Library LGBT Research Guide: libguides.tri-c.edu/LGBT

Ultimate LGBTQIA+ Pride Book List:

penguinrandomhouse.com/the-read-down/the-ultimate-book-list-for-pride-month

Online Resources

Advocates for Youth — LGBTQ Health and Rights:

advocatesforyouth.org/issues/lgbtq-health-and-rights

American Civil Liberties Union: aclu.org/issues/lgbt-rights

Provides legal help to LGBTQ+ folks dealing with discrimination.

Anti-Violence Project: avp.org

Empowers LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing and education and supports survivors through counseling and advocacy.

Campus Pride: campuspride.org

National online community and resource network committed to student leaders and campus organizations who work to create a safer campus environment free of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, heterosexism and genderism at colleges and universities.

DignityUSA: dignityusa.org

Works for respect and justice for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons in the Catholic Church and the world through education, advocacy and support.

Equality Ohio: equalityohio.org

Advocates and educates to achieve fair treatment and equal opportunity for all Ohioans, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Fortunate Families: fortunatefamilies.com

Resource and networking ministry for Catholic parents of LGBTQ+ daughters and sons.

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD): glaad.org

Tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN): glsen.org

GLSEN's mission is to create safe and affirming K-12 schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Gay Men's Health Crisis: gmhc.org

The world's first and leading provider of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and advocacy.

Online Resources (Cont.)

Human Rights Campaign: hrc.org

Effectively lobbies Congress, provides campaign support and educates the public to ensure that LGBTQ+ Americans can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community.

Intersex Society of North America: isna.org

Devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with an anatomy that someone decided is not standard for male or female.

Lambda Legal: lambdalegal.org

Oldest national organization pursuing high-impact litigation, public education and advocacy on behalf of equality and civil rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and people with HIV.

National Center for Transgender Equality: transequality.org

Works to end discrimination and violence against transgender people.

National LGBTQ Task Force: thetaskforce.org

Founded in 1973 as the first national LGBT civil rights and advocacy organization, the Task Force remains the movement's leading voice for freedom, justice and equality.

PFLAG: pflag.org

A support group for parents and friends of LGBTQ individuals to help promote understanding and acceptance.

Point Foundation: pointfoundation.org

Empowers LGBTQ students to achieve their full academic and leadership potential. Various scholarships available.

Q Christian Fellowship: qchristian.org

A nonprofit ministry serving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians.

Safe Schools Coalition: safeschoolscoalition.org

An international public-private partnership in support of LGBT youth that works to help schools become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn.

Trans Student Educational Resources: transstudent.org

A youth-led organization dedicated to advocating for and empowering trans and gender nonconforming students. Lots of useful info and graphics, including the Gender Unicorn.

Trevor Project: thetrevorproject.org **Hotline:** 866-4-U-TREVOR (488-7386)

National organization that provides free crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for LGBTQ+ individuals age 25 and under.



More Online Resources

2017 GLSEN National School Climate Survey: glsen.org/article/2017-national-school-climate-survey

AARP Pride: aarp.org/home-family/voices/lgbt-pride

Advocacy and Services for LGBT Elders: sageusa.org

Advocates for Informed Choice: aiclegal.wordpress.com

Aging With Pride: age-pride.org

American Psychological Association: apa.org

LGBT Topics: apa.org/topics/lgbt/index

Office on Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity: apa.org/pi/lgbt/index

Division 44: apadivisions.org/division-44/index

Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling:
algbtic.org/competencies-2

BiNet USA: binetusa.org

Bisexual Activist Robyn Ochs: robynochs.com

Center of Excellence for Transgender Health: prevention.ucsf.edu/transhealth

Forge Transgender Aging Network: forge-forward.org/aging

Gender Odyssey: genderodyssey.org

HRC Resources: hrc.org/resources

Informed Consent for Access to Trans Health: icath.org

Ingersoll Gender Center: ingersollgendercenter.org

Intersex Campaign for Equality: intersexequality.com

Intersex Initiative: intersexinitiative.org

LGBT Aging Issues Network: asaging.org/lain

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging: lgbtagingcenter.org

Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling: tandfonline.com/loi/wlco20

Ohio's Equality Profile: lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile_state/OH

PFLAG Cleveland Resources: pflagcleveland.org/links-resources

Southern Poverty Law Center: splcenter.org/issues/lgbtq-rights

Sylvia Rivera Law Project: srlp.org

Transgender Law Center: transgenderlawcenter.org

Transfaith: transfaithonline.org

Washington Gender Alliance: washingtongenderalliance.com

Williams Institute: williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu

World Professional Association for Transgender Health: wpath.org



The Safe Zone Ally Resource Manual is an amalgamation of various online resources and institutional manuals. Every effort has been made to provide the most current information.

Feedback is welcome at safezone@tri-c.edu. Thank you for being a Safe Zone Ally!

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Visit the Safe Zone website at www.tri-c.edu/safezone to access the Safe Zone presentation, Top 10 Takeaways flyer, list of Certified Allies and more.

