



K-12 SCHOOLS

A Starting Place Discussion Guide for Teachers, Staff and Administrators

Gender: Your Guide (GYG) is aimed at people who may not know much about gender diversity, and welcomes beginners into the project of making spaces where gender is less rigid: a source of more joy and less harm. This discussion guide offers a starting place for people who work together in a K-12 school.

Before you host the discussion... it might be a good idea to read the whole book. Answers to many common questions are found in GYG's pages, and are given in accessible language. I suggest thinking ahead about questions or thoughts you have heard from the people who are participating, and marking relevant passages.

Suggested advanced reading for everyone:

- Preface and Introduction
- Chapter 1: Understanding Gender in Today's World
- Chapter 2: Everyone is a Gender Expert, Whether You Know It or Not

Begin your discussion by... inviting people to make a personal connection to the Ch. 2 story about infertility by sharing a memory of a student who stood out and was called into question due to gender expectations.

Suggested group readings (together, aloud) and activities:

- Read Chapter 2: Everyone is a Gender Expert, Whether You Know It or Not (pp. 45-49)
 - Divide participants into groups by grade range, or in ways that bring together staff who have worked with the same student cohorts. Invite them to read and complete the 'Draw Your Gender-Friendly Road Map' activity (p. 50) by selecting a particular student or two whom they all know. Debrief as a whole group by reading pp. 51-54 aloud (no sidebar) and identifying students who could 'get away with' standing out, or make the question-calling stop. How might knowing who these students are help you to create a gender-friendly space?
- Read Chapter 6: Noticing and Changing Gendered Language (pp. 136-141 including the sidebar)
 - This section brings up two examples to illustrate how gendered our language can be, and some workarounds: Service Canada counters, and doctors' offices. What are some parallels you see with your school? For both charts, re-create the 'Less-Gender Friendly' and 'More Gender-Friendly' columns and fill in ways of talking about students or families (p. 140) and office greetings (p. 141) that might take place where you are. How could you bring about change?
- Divide into five smaller groups with each group taking one of the false arguments against gender-friendly change covered in Chapter 9: Growing Your Gender-Friendly Community (pp. 192-202). Each group reads their false argument section aloud and then role plays an encounter with a parent, student or colleague who voices that argument. Alternatively, a fishbowl could run with the entire group where participants tap in and out of playing the different roles at their discretion.

Next steps: Take action in order to bring about the changes you came up with during the Chapter 6 discussion. Consider coming back together to read Chapter 3: Learning About the Transgender Spectrum.