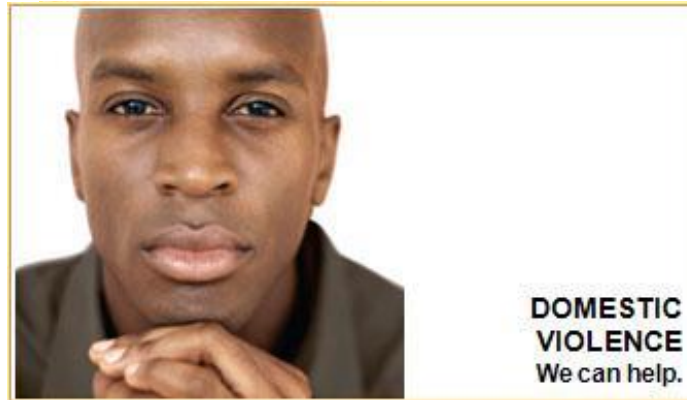




# Working with TGNC Communities

Prepared for the SHNNY Conference  
June 12, 2018



**116 Nassau St., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, NY, NY 10038**  
**212-714-1184 | [www.avp.org](http://www.avp.org)**  
**24-Hour, Bilingual Hotline 212-714-1141**

# Your Trainer(s)

Lolan Sevilla

**Pronouns: they/them/theirs**

*Training Coordinator*

[lsevilla@avp.org](mailto:lsevilla@avp.org)

212-714-1184 x50

Talia Gruber

**Pronouns: she/her/hers**

*Economic Empowerment Specialist*

[tgruber@avp.org](mailto:tgruber@avp.org)

212-714-1184 x63

# The New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP)

- AVP envisions a world in which all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ), and HIV-affected people are safe, respected, and live free from violence.
- AVP's mission is to empower LGBTQ and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing and education, and support survivors through counseling and advocacy.
- AVP is nationally recognized as experts on best practices when working with LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of violence.



# The New York City Anti-Violence Project

Client Services	Legal Services	Community Organizing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 24-hour English/Spanish hotline</li><li>- Short-term and long-term individual supportive counseling</li><li>- DV Shelter Advocacy</li><li>- Support Groups<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- HV, SV, IPV specific</li></ul></li><li>- Advocacy, Referrals</li><li>- Hospital, precinct, and court accompaniments</li><li>- OVS assistance</li><li>- Community Leadership Institute Advocacy Program</li><li>- Economic Empowerment Program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Consultation</li><li>- Representation</li><li>- Advocacy</li><li>- Information &amp; Referrals</li></ul> <p>Around the following legal issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Family Law</li><li>- Matrimony/Divorce</li><li>- Immigration</li><li>- Legal Name Change</li><li>- Housing Matters</li><li>- Support in Criminal Cases</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Education and Training Institute</li><li>- Rapid Incident Response</li><li>- Coalition work/movement building</li><li>- NCAVP<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- National Report publication on HV &amp; IPV</li></ul></li><li>- NYS LGBTQ DV Network</li><li>- Public Advocacy</li><li>- Trans/Gender Non-Conforming Leadership Academy</li><li>- Volunteer opportunities<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Speaker's Bureau</li><li>- Hotline Crisis Counselor Training</li><li>- Outreach/Vigils/Rallies</li><li>- Community Action Committees</li></ul></li></ul>

# AVP's Approach to Anti-Violence Work

## AVP's approach to anti-violence work is:

- Anti-oppressive:** We recognize that LGBTQ and HIV-affected people hold multiple and intersecting identities that impact the way they experience violence, and what happens when they reach out for help.
- Survivor-Centered/Harm Reduction/Empowerment-Based:** We recognize that survivors are experts on their own lives, and we work from their point of view. They are our guide in the process of healing from the trauma of violence. Survivors know what they have been through, what they need, and where they want to go.
- Trauma-Informed:** We recognize that survivors have likely experienced intersecting forms of violence, that may create complex trauma histories, which impacts their development and coping strategies.

# AVP in the Five Boroughs!

## **Manhattan**

- Main Office
- Manhattan Family Justice Center (FJC)
- GMHC

## **Brooklyn**

- Brooklyn Family Justice Center

## **Queens**

- Queens Family Justice Center

## **Bronx**

- Bronx Family Justice Center
- Adolescent AIDS Project at Montefiore Medical Center (AAP)

## **Staten Island**

- Staten Island LGBT Community Center

# What to Expect

- Getting on the Same Page: Language and Terminology
- What does Systemic Oppression Got to do With It?
- Barriers for TGNC communities and Supportive Housing
- Individual, Interpersonal & Institutional Best Practices
- Case Study: Carla
- (If there's time) O&A. Everyone brings unique experience, knowledge, and expertise to this space. Please take care of yourself, be mindful of how you participate, and actively join the learning process!



# Getting on the Same Page: Language & Terminology

# What is “LGBTQ”

A standard acronym:

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Transgender
- Queer

This acronym has expanded over the years and includes far more identities than are represented here. What are some that you would like to include?

# Language and Terminology

**Lesbian:** A person who identifies as a woman and is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other women.

**Gay:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some members of the same gender. “Gay” often refers to a male-identified person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to some other men. “Gay” should not be used as an umbrella term to refer to all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; the term “LGBT” is more accurate and inclusive.

**Bisexual:** A person who is emotionally and/or physically attracted to two genders.

**Queer:** An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to dominant societal norms. While it is used as a neutral, or even a positive term among many LGBT people today, historically “queer” was used as a derogatory slur.

*T comes later...*

# What is HIV-affected?

HIV-affected refers to people whose lives are directly impacted by HIV/AIDS.

This can include those who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, those with loved ones living with HIV/AIDS, or those living in or identifying with communities where HIV/AIDS is widespread.

# Let's talk about Gender and Sexuality!

# How is sex assigned?

# What is Sex?

Sex has traditionally been defines as:  
the biological and physiological characteristics that  
define “men and women.” *(World Health Organization).*

- Primary sex characteristics
  - penis, testes, vagina, uterus, and ovaries.
  - Chromosomes
  - Hormones
- Secondary sex characteristics
  - Facial hair
  - Height
  - Body mass
  - Vocal range
  - Adam’s Apple
  - Pronounced jawline
  - Breasts

# What is Gender Identity?

Gender Identity is our external experience of our internal feelings and expressions of gender.

- For cisgender people, their gender identity correlates to the sex they were assigned at birth.
  - A transgender person's gender identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.
  - A person's gender identity may **not** always match the sex they were assigned at birth
- **This is unique to every individual**

# How are sex and gender different?

# How are gender and sexual orientation different?

# Gender Identity vs. Sexual Orientation

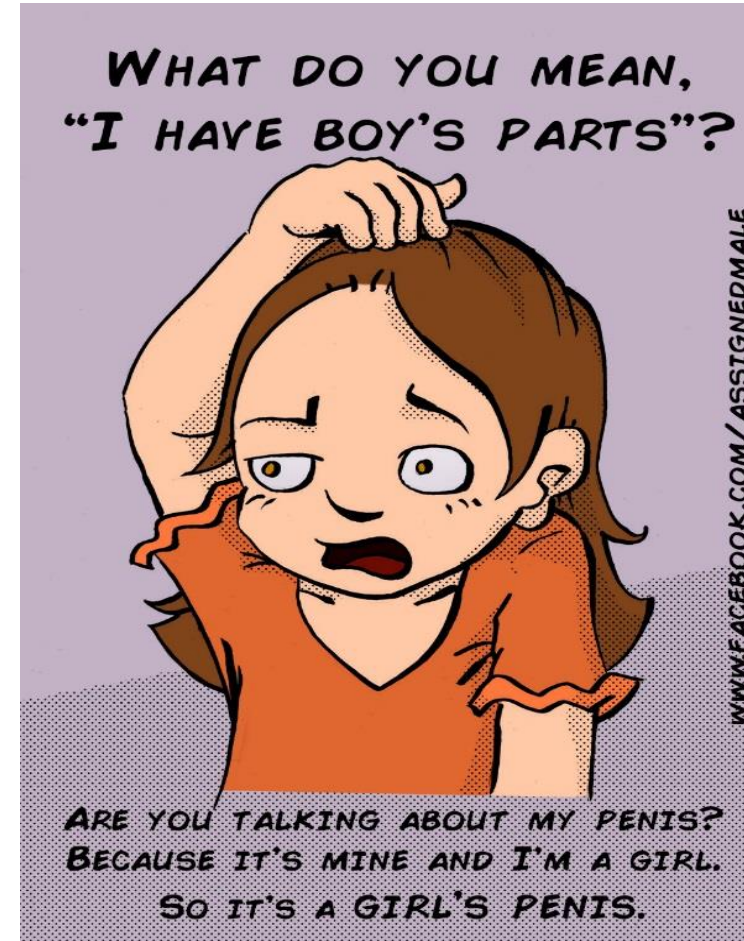
**Sexual Orientation** is about who you are sexually, romantically, emotionally, and/or spiritually attracted to

**Gender Identity** is about how you understand your own gender and how you express that.

# Gender Identities Embodied

# Transgender: An Umbrella Term

The term transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose way of understanding and expressing their own gender is different from what society expects and/or what sex they were assigned at birth



# Gender Non-Conforming

Any identity that does not conform to society's standards of what it means to embody men or women.

This does not have to adhere to any type of gender binary, and can simply mean that the person's identity runs along the spectrum from masculine to feminine



<http://www.mambaonline.com/2017/04/18/femme-public-creative-spotlights-trans-gender-non-conforming-issues/>

# Non Binary Identities

Any identity that does not adhere to a gender binary(e.g. not man, not woman, gender fluid, etc.)

People who identify as non-binary may or may not consider themselves to be transgender.

Non-binary people may wish to transition so that their gender expression more closely reflects their internal identity.



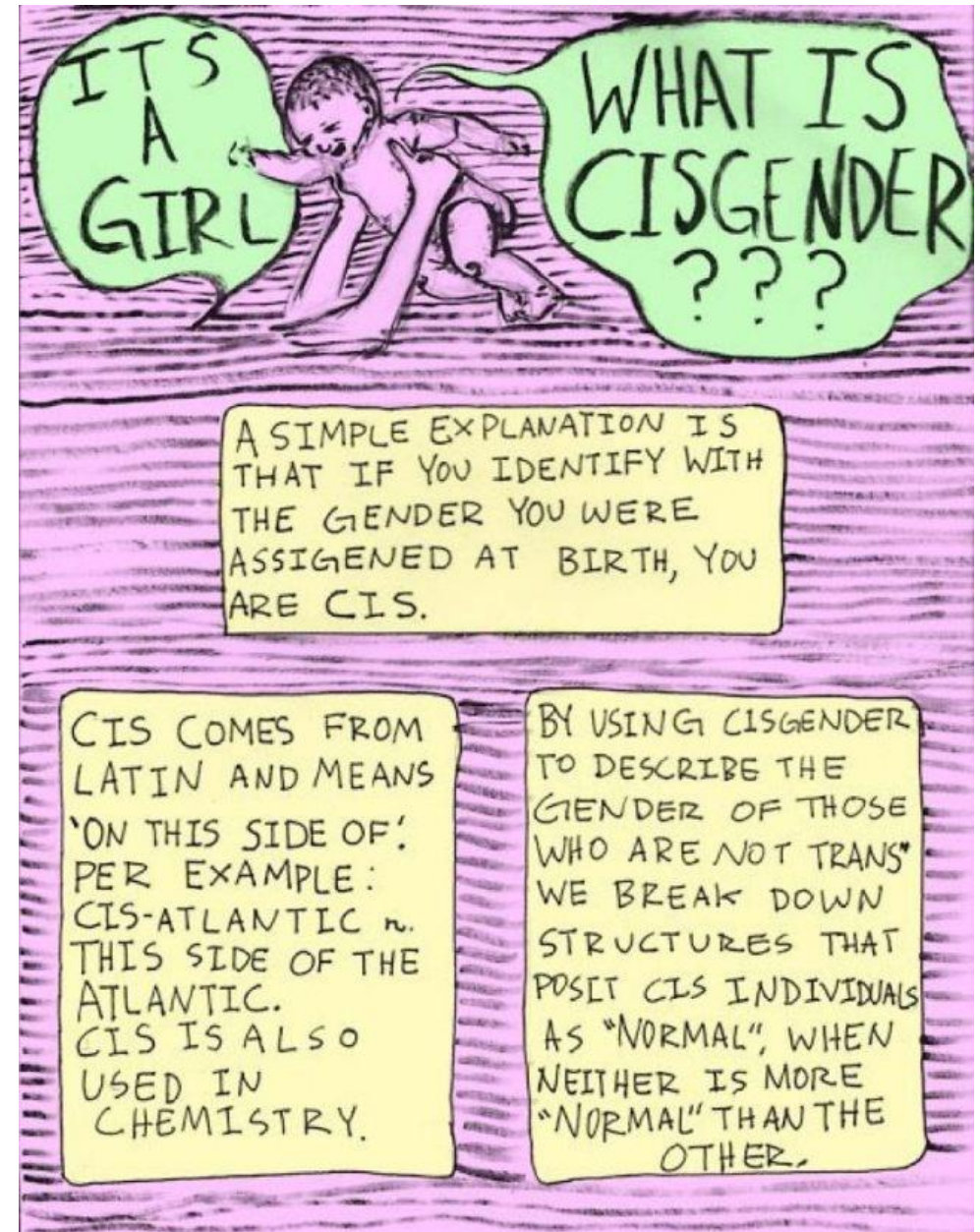
<http://beyondthebinary.co.uk/nonbinary-narratives/>

# Cisgender

A term for people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth. [AMAB/AFAB]

Cisgender may also be defined as those who have "a gender identity or perform a gender role society considers appropriate for one's sex."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cisgender>



# Ways People Describe Their Gender!

*This is not an exhaustive list; it is sampling of how some members of the LGBTQ community identify*

- Femme
- High/low/stone/soft/hard
  - Butch
- Genderqueer
  - Stud
  - AG
- Genderfluid
- Gender neutral
  - Agender
  - Two-spirit
- Gender variant

# Final Thoughts

- ❑ **Gender** is not always binary, and there are many diverse ways that people identify their gender.
- ❑ **Sexual orientation** and **gender identity** are different things
- ❑ **Sexual orientation** describes who people are attracted to
- ❑ **Gender identity** describes how someone identifies their gender, and does not have to do with who they are attracted to

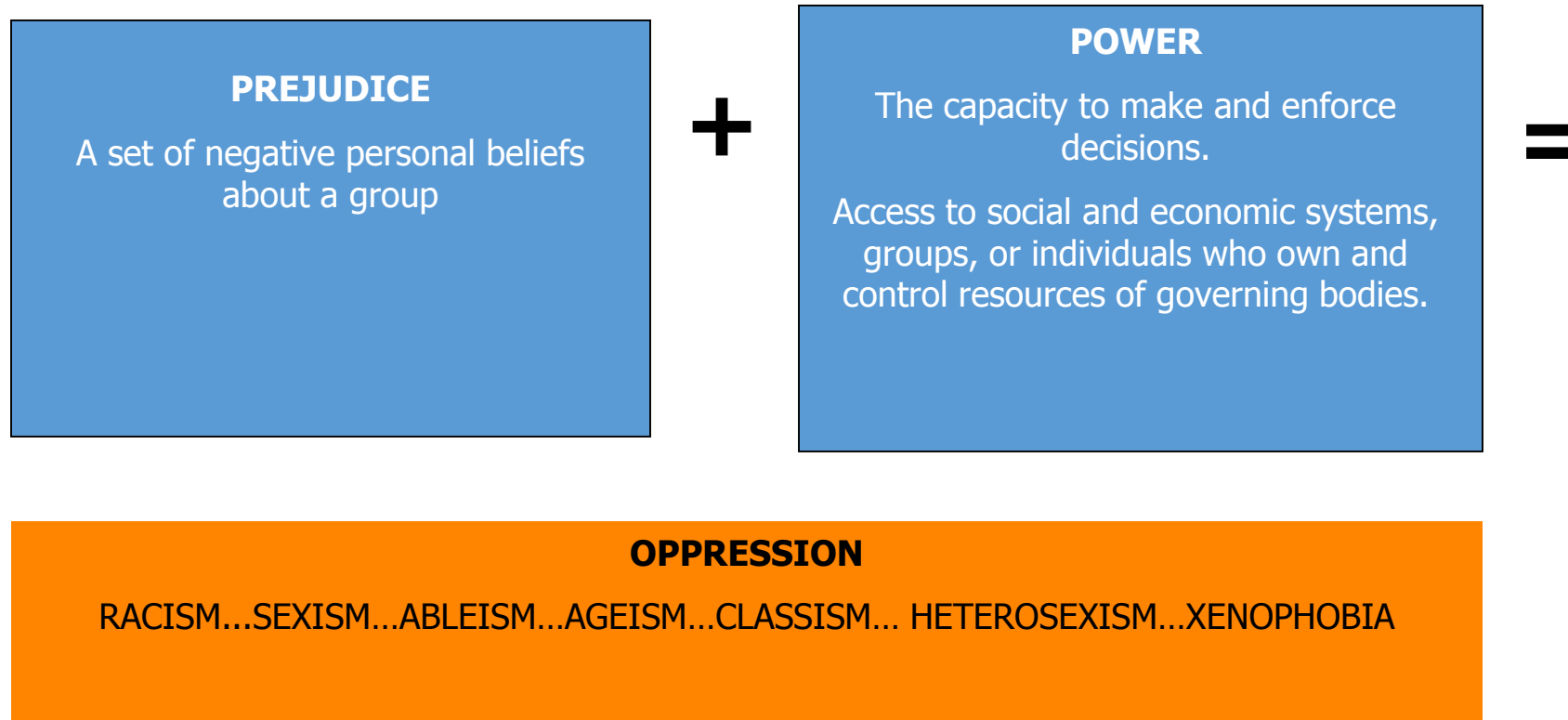


# **Power, Privilege, and Systemic Oppression**

# What is Oppression?

“Oppression is a pattern or system of inequality, which gives **power** and **privileges** to one group of people at the expense of another.”

-GLSEN, 2004: Jumpstart Guide, Part V



# Privilege is:

*a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor. There is racial privilege, gender (and identity) privilege, heterosexual privilege, economic privilege, religious privilege, and the list goes on and on. At some point, you have to surrender to the kinds of privilege you hold. Nearly everyone, particularly in the developed world, has something someone else doesn't, something someone else yearns for.*

**- Roxane Gay**

# The Four I's of Oppression

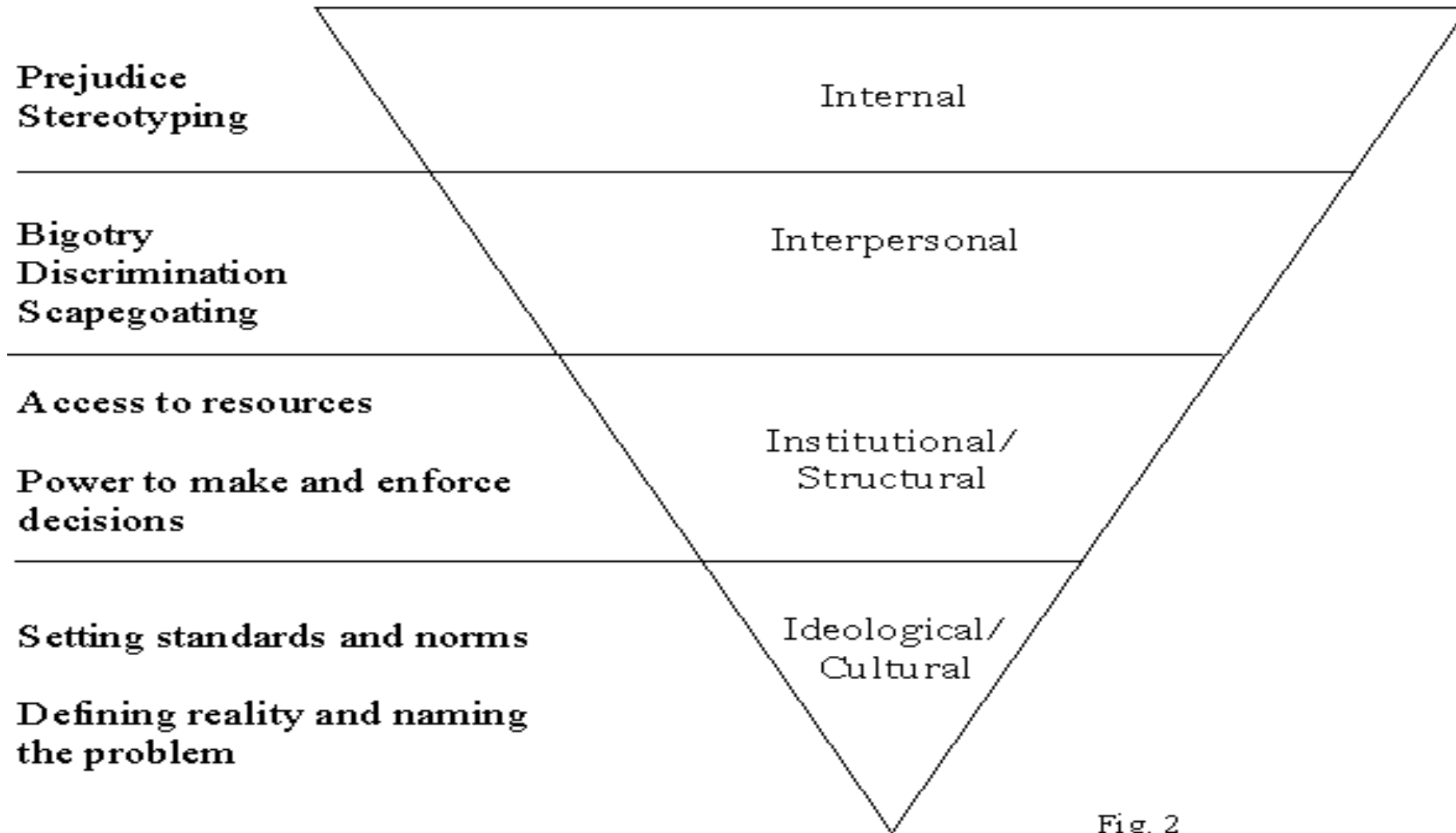


Fig. 2

# FABRIC OF OPPRESSION IN THE U.S.

SOCIAL GROUP	AGENT / PRIVILEGED	TARGET / OPPRESSED	OPPRESSION
ABILITY STATUS	Able-bodied and people not living with disabilities	People living with disabilities	ABLEISM
AGE	Adults 20-50	Youth and those over 50	AGEISM
APPEARANCE / BODY	Western standard of beauty	Everyone not fitting the standard	LOOKISM
GENDER	Gender conforming boys and men	Girls and women; Gender non-conforming; Transgender populations	GENDER OPPRESSION (sexism, transmisogyny, misogyny, transmisogynoir, transphobia)
NATIONALITY	U.S. citizens	Non-U.S. citizens	XENOPHOBIA
RACE	White people	People of Color	RACISM
RELIGION	Christians	Non-Christians	RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual / People identifying as "straight"	LGBTQ people and other non-heterosexuals	HETEROSEXISM
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS / ECONOMIC CLASS	Wealthy and owning classes; Upper middle class	The poor; The working class	CLASSISM

*Adapted from The American Conference on Diversity*

# Four I's of Oppression Example: Transphobia

***Ideological:*** the creation and overall acceptance of a gender binary (male / female) that reinforces societal rigidity around any gender identity that falls outside of the spectrum; particularly in regards to how a person should act and/or look. The systems that reinforce this are called heteronormativity & cisnormativity.

***Institutional:*** the passing of laws that target Transgender people who use public restrooms reflecting their gender identity.

***Interpersonal:*** a cisgender individual taking it upon themselves to police a transgender person's right to use a public restroom reflective of their gender identity through verbal or physical violence.

***Internalized:*** an individual feeling like their transition must look or present a particular way in order to be "accepted" or "valid" as transgender; feeling like one must "pass" within the gender binary (male or female); or even that there's something wrong or not normal about themselves because they are trans.

# **What Are the Barriers Impacting TGNC Communities Seeking Supportive Housing?**

# Discriminatory Practices by Service Providers

## Indirect

- Falsely stating the availability of units to exclude LGB and TGNC people from obtaining housing
- Outing client to potential roommates to “make sure the roommate is okay with rooming with a LGBTQ person”
- Using coded language: Stating that this person will not “be a good fit” for the building
- Ignoring and not addressing hate violence that is targeted towards client from other tenants

# Discriminatory Practices by Service Providers

## Direct

- Explicitly being denied housing because of actual or perceived gender identity or expression
- Service providers intimidating or threatening safety of TGNC individuals (eg. Slurs, threats of violence, referencing immigration status, requests or expectations of sexual favors)
- Purposefully misgendering a client and refusing to use proper pronouns
- Asking invasive questions about client's body and/or relationships
- Calling police on the client rather than trying to talk with them or listen

# Discriminatory Practices by Service Providers

## Explicit

- Taking payment for an apartment, and then disappearing without having provided the services paid for
- Targeting client for harassment and physical/sexual violence and/or abuse
- Using client's social security number
- Extortion by asking for excessive fees to find an apartment specifically in reference to an individual's gender identity or expression

# Structural Barriers for TGNC Communities Seeking Supportive Housing

## Privately Funded Agencies:

- Credit is an issue (bad credit, hard to fix credit, no credit history, etc.)
- If the individual is a survivor, having accrued debt due to Intimate Partner Violence
- Lack of steady employment opportunities or (perceived or actual) non-traditional employment
- Issues with a roommate(s) or neighbors
- Brokers or landlords claiming not to accept government benefits (eg. Section 8 or HASA subsidies)
- Tenant harassment by brokers or landlords

# Structural Barriers for TGNC Communities and Supportive Housing

## City Funded Agencies:

- Aging out of supportive housing
- No TGNC-specific resources for filling out inaccessible supportive housing paperwork that is funded through the city (excluding youth)
- Issues with a roommate(s) or neighbors
- Barriers to getting on disability

# Case Study:

Carla is a Latina woman of transgender experience. She had been living in a women's shelter off-and-on for the past couple years since leaving a relationship where she experienced physical and verbal violence. After several failed attempts to apply for benefits, Carla has finally been accepted into supportive housing with a roommate and is feeling stable. A few weeks in, however, she comes to you reporting that her roommate is discriminating against her, calling her slurs and being hostile to her in the apartment. She doesn't want to leave her home, but doesn't know what to do. How would you or your agency go about supporting Carla's concerns?

# **So What Does Support and Active Allyship for TGNC Communities Look Like?**

# How (Not) to ask Questions about Identity

“What is your real name?”

- **Instead** ask, “What is your given name?” **and** “Is there a name that you go by or prefer other than your given name?”
- **Ask everyone** these questions, not just people you think might not be straight/cis.

“Are you male or female?”

- **Instead** ask, “What is your gender identity?” and “What are your pronouns?”
- **If you need information for legal documents** ask, “What is your assigned gender on your legal documents?”

“But you wanted to tell me earlier!”

- Survivors may be comfortable disclosing gender/sexual identity with you, **but not** with doctors, police, or other service providers.

# Additional Guidelines for respectful conversation

adapted from “Trans Inclusion Policy Manual For Women’s Organizations”

- **Use pronouns and name** that are consistent with a person’s stated preference; if the person has not directly stated a preference, **ask**.
- **Do not assume** you know how a person refers to their body, **including what they call their genitalia**.
- ***Do not ask questions about a person’s genitals***
- **Clarify** your reasons for asking questions about a person’s body.
- Apply these guidelines to **everyone**, not just people you think may not be straight/cis.

# You May Find This Useful

This list of pronouns is a small sample of the pronouns people use all around the country.

	Subject	Object	Pronoun	Pronunciation
Gender Binary	<b>she</b>	<b>her</b>	<b>hers</b>	<b>as it looks</b>
	<b>he</b>	<b>him</b>	<b>his</b>	<b>as it looks</b>
Gender Neutral	<b>they*</b>	<b>them*</b>	<b>their*</b>	<b>as it looks</b>
	<b>ze</b>	<b>hir</b>	<b>hirs</b>	<b>zhee, here, heres</b>
	<b>ze</b>	<b>zir</b>	<b>zirs</b>	<b>zhee, zhere, zheres</b>
	<b>xe</b>	<b>xem</b>	<b>xyr</b>	<b>zhee, zhem, zhere</b>
<i>*used as singular</i>				

# Individual Action Steps

- Don't make assumptions about another's gender identity\*
- Assess your own values/beliefs regarding sexual orientation & gender identity
- Address your internal biases
- Understand the impacts of trauma, and don't take it personally\*
- Educate yourself on the communities you are serving
- Don't tokenize/objectify clients
- Acknowledge what you don't know and apologize if you make a mistake\*
- Know your personal limits
  - Seek support/supervision

# Interpersonal Action Steps

- Use inclusive language (such as “partner”)
- Respect self-identification & self-determination
- Avoid assuming sexual orientation
- Be cautious of stereotypes
- Avoid minimizing the person’s experiences, and believe what people tell you
- Allow space for clients to build trust with you
- Leave room for trauma responses
- Confront discrimination & prejudice (jokes, comments)
- Avoid centering yourself in the conversation

# Institutional Action Steps

- Create TGNC-inclusive forms, materials, procedures
- Create all-gender, non-segregated restrooms
- Post “safe space” symbols in organizational spaces
- Train ALL staff- especially security, reception, intake, case managers, organizational decision-makers – on LGBTQ-sensitivity and anti-oppression work
- Develop resources – create connections with LGBTQ service providers & programs
- Develop programming with an anti-oppressive and trauma-informed lens
- Targeted outreach to TGNC communities
- Review employment policies procedures and hire staff reflective of communities served (TGNC diversity, racial diversity, etc.)
- Create advisory boards for LGBTQ individuals to shape/inform institutional policies

*“Sometimes when we are generous in small, barely detectable ways, it can change someone’s life forever.”*

*- Margaret Cho*



# Your Trainer(s)

Lolan Sevilla

**Pronouns: they/them/theirs**

*Training Coordinator*

[lsevilla@avp.org](mailto:lsevilla@avp.org)

212-714-1184 x50

Talia Gruber

**Pronouns: she/her/hers**

*Economic Empowerment Specialist*

[tgruber@avp.org](mailto:tgruber@avp.org)

212-714-1184

# References

James, Letitia, Public Advocate for the City of New York, (2017). Policy Brief: Combating Trans Housing Discrimination in New York City.

National Health Care for the Homeless Council (2016). Serving Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Persons: Establishing and Improving Models of Care for Those Without Homes.