

Transgender 101 Training Transcript

As Presented by Adrien Lawyer, Co-founder of the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico

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This document is a transcript of the following video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH0vb9AM7Cg&feature=emb_title

INTRODUCTIONS

Christopher:

Good evening, everybody. My name is Christopher Papa Leo. I'm a third-year law student. Only 2/3 of a year left to go, very excited. The end is near, and not near enough, and simultaneously way too close.

I am also the president of the Lambda Law Student Association which is the LGBTQ group for law students here on our campus. We do several things throughout the year in order to raise awareness regarding legal issues, legal rights for the LGBTQ community as well as providing social events bringing people into the fold and so we were very excited to be able to partner with the Democratic Party of Bernalillo County. Thank you very much, Karen, for folding us in and inviting you all onto our campus. If you have any questions about what Lambda does please find me at a point. Our treasurer, Emma Stalls, also here so if you have any questions about what Lambda does here on campus or if you'd like to do something with Lambda here on campus we'd be very happy to work with you and partner with you so that's, that's all about me.

Now let's get to the fun part. Adrien Lawyer is our speaker this evening ... I'm sorry, Flora, pardon me.

Flora:

Hello everybody, I'm Flora Lucero. A lot of familiar faces here. The chair of the Democratic Party of Bernalillo County and our Vice Chair Manny Crespín is up here, and I want to thank Karen for putting this together and Moss Templeton and this is wonderful. I'm very grateful that you all are here and we're making these deliberate efforts to really be democratic in a true way and to reshape our democracy to be what we want it to be and that's an inclusive representative democracy and we need to examine ourselves to understand how we can be the most that we can be in this this place we call the United States of America.

And so, we honor the land that we're standing as something that came and belonged to others before us and we honor one another and our fullness. And I thank you once again for being here and I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the future in a more full way. And thank you, Adrien. [Applause]

So, to introduce Adrien is a great privilege of mine. Adrien Lawyer is the co-director and co-founder of the transgender Resource Center of New Mexico. TGRCNM is the only organization that provides a wide array of services solely for the transgender community in the state of New Mexico including food, clothing, bus passes, rapid HIV testing, counseling, and many other services. And if you have not visited their website you should because it gives you lots of opportunities on how you can get engaged.

Adrien's presented this presentation, Transgender 101 more than 1,100 times all over the state. He's been instrumental in doing advocacy and at the individual policy level. For instance, TGRCNM worked for several years with APS to implement transgender student policies. And a very recent success that Adrien will go into in greater detail which you may be aware of is some work with

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our vital statistics and making it so that transgender people have a non-binary option. So, Adrien will go into that in greater detail. Adrien's a transgender man, father working for quality accessibility for the entire transgender community in New Mexico. Please welcome him. Thank you very much. [Applause]

PRESENTATION

Adrien Lawyer:

I am a lifelong performer and I do not like courtesy claps. You don't even know if you like it yet. If you clap at the end I will eat it up I swear. My mom was one of those moms who clapped a little bit too much, right, I would just eat my food she would just clap. Now it just feels like someone should always be clapping but I like to earn it, I like to earn it a little bit first.

So I know there's some handouts up at the top and I neglected to put my cards and flyers up there at the beginning but they're up there now so if you want any of that information please grab it on your way out.

This is transgender 101 and the reason we call it that is it's really just a naming convention that advocates and educators all over the country use. So, there's a lot of us all over the US that are doing trainings called Transgender 101 with all different slide decks, you know some varying content. There's not a standard, we're just all doing it. So, I actually think mine is not really a 101, you know, it's got a lot in it. So, sometimes I think people are turning off like oh this is just gonna be like a, you know, intro and really I think we're gonna get deep so hopefully you'll feel that you got something out of it wasn't too rudimentary.

So, yeah, my name is Adrien Lawyer. Ha ha, my name is Lawyer; here we are at the law school and my name is Lawyer and that's hilarious and I am NOT an attorney which, weirdly, people sometimes ask me. I was doing an OBGYN practice a few weeks ago and they said oh are you an attorney? And I said no. Why would you ask me that? Just because I said my name is Adrien Lawyer I was, like, that does not even make sense. Like, why would you say that? I am surrounded by these people. My spouse is an attorney, my brother is actually an attorney which is way funnier. He is also named Lawyer. He is a lawyer named Lawyer in Memphis Tennessee. That was actually a pretty evident factor to me. I did not think that it was dignified to be a lawyer named Lawyer. I probably should have thought it over a little bit better because I know that he makes more money than I do. I run a nonprofit organization which you definitely do not do to get rich.

The transgender Resource Center of New Mexico. So, we've been around since 2008. We are structured as a 501C3 organization. We can spend the rest of the time we have a lot of here talking about why it is good and bad to be a 501C3 organization in large part because our hands are so tied around politics. You know, in elections that's a really bad thing. It sort of makes you an agent of the IRS in that way and then you're very limited in what you can do around influencing elections. So, that's the drag but there's a lot of revenue sources that were tapped into that we couldn't even access if we weren't a 501C3. So, for us that's the best choice right now.

So for 11 years we've been doing work for trans people and our families and loved ones all throughout the state of New Mexico and our work falls under three main headers. So, we do direct services, we do advocacy, and we do education. So, I'm gonna give a little few minutes on each one of those. I'm sorry I know people like ahh, stop talking about the organization and do the slides. But I'm an ED and that's what we do, and I really want you to know about the organization just in case anybody here would like to get involved or in case anybody here knows someone who needs our help. I really want you to have a sense of what we do. So, our direct services around the state involve things like helping people do legal name changes, update their identity documents, we do some emergency financial assistance, we provide referrals to trans fluent providers and businesses, we do what's called peer support, just talking to people, we ship out trans specific items to people around New Mexico. For instance, transgender men will sometimes wear an

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undergarment called a binder that sort of flattens and compresses the chest if you haven't had surgery on your chest. For some people that's the only thing that makes them confident enough to go out of their house and be part of their community. But a binder can be between 40 and 50 dollars so for some people it feels out of reach financially to get a binder and we'll just purchase it and send it to somebody anywhere in New Mexico. I really, don't tell, but Arizona and Colorado you know like we're not like, 'sorry too bad you're in Window Rock.' You know, we tell people around this region, now if you're in Maine I'm probably gonna try to find you something closer, but around here we tend to just help people who contact us.

We also work a lot with people who are incarcerated here in New Mexico who are trans. Jails, prisons, and immigration detention. There are about 18 transgender women in State Penitentiaries here throughout the state. We do in-person visitation and letter-writing with them. We work with a lot of our folks who are in and out of the Metropolitan Detention Center, which is Bernalillo's County Jail. The largest County Jail in the state. And then the only transgender unit in the immigration detention system in the US is actually housed in Milan, New Mexico, and a facility called Cibola County Correctional Center. So, it is a specific segregated dorm for transgender women, really, and it houses a pretty steady population of about 25 to 35 almost exclusively Central American trans women who are asylum seekers who are being imprisoned out there in Milan. So, every four weeks we go out and visit with the women. We put money on their books for commissary and phone calls, we are liaison between them and ICE with different issues that come up. We help them when they get released with cell phones and backpacks and stuff like that. And then we also coordinate other programming to go out there through the month to provide them access to other programming as well as just our visits. So, that's kind of our direct service.

Oh and 18 months ago we open an amazing thrift store, yes, Thrift a Lot, what's up, Thrift a Lot? I love it! Okay if you haven't been over to Thrift a Lot you really should check it out, it's really gorgeous. It's on Lomas at Monroe. We're right next to Clark's pet store, so if you're somebody who shops at a thrift store you should definitely go check out Thrift a Lot. We get so much amazing community support that really, the product in there is really great and it's just a gorgeous, like real clean, cheerful thrift store. And if you're someone who donates to thrift stores then you should donate to TAL because that store is creating money for our programs and also jobs for trans and gender non-conforming people, many of whom have really pretty serious barriers to employment. So, it's really creating some amazing job opportunities for people as well. Plus, TAL will come pick up your stuff. There's not a lot of places that will do that in town, but we will. Not like a t-shirt you know but like you have some stuff to give them they'll come and get it so just call them and they'll come and get it.

So that's kind of our service work in terms of advocacy. We will advocate for people in just a one on one way. Trans people, I hope to get to the data slides here, trans folks are reporting really bad outcomes in really just every single area of life, still. And I don't mean to single out any one area because it's really every area but I often think about medical care because that's something that we're all inevitably going to need and trans people report such abusive experiences in clinical settings that they also report postponing or even avoiding medical care even if they are sick or injured. So, if someone has an advocate who will go with them to a medical appointment and maybe they will just go to the medical appointment and get the help that they need. So, we go and just stand with people in places where they're too afraid to be by themselves. A name change hearing if you don't know is a hearing in district court in front of a judge. A lot of people are like, 'I don't want to stand in front of a judge in a court, that's freaking me out. Will you just go with me?' So, we will just go with them, right. So, whenever somebody says I just need somebody to accompany me and help me and be there with me, we just try to plug in and do that.

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But we also do policy advocacy. So, we have written and implemented or analyzed and reviewed trans policy for a whole bunch of different entities around the state. And then we do legislative work as well. So, for me last week was a super magical thing. I'm always embarrassed to admit this, but I never worked in a non-profit setting at all until I started one, which has got to be the single worst way to learn how to administer a non-profit, is by like inventing one. Just, really I don't advise it, right. So, for me I was in the corporate world, mainly software, before I started the center and so I had really never been part of the legislative process before I had never really seen how a law you know, how a bill became a law and then gets enacted and all of that.

So, we started in 2007's long session trying to pass this law about modernizing the way you change your birth certificate here in New Mexico. And we got it passed and signed in 2019 this spring and last week all of the rules and processes were finalized. And we took our first group of six people up to vital records in Santa Fe and then got their revised birth certificates in real time. And our law changed the old law. So, our old law in New Mexico had been that you had to have surgery on your body and vital records actually had clarify that they really did mean surgery on your genitals in order to update the marker on your birth certificate, which is this very outdated sort of retrograde way of thinking about how you get foundational identity documents that match your presentation and your identity. It just doesn't make sense that we would say somebody has to have a surgery on their genitalia that they may not even want to have in order to get documents that fit with who they are you know. It just doesn't compute really.

So, our law made this update beyond the basis of what is called self-attestation. So, basically what I say my gender is, is the most accurate way of knowing what my gender is and I sign a sworn statement to the effect of this is my gender and vital records will just change it based on that notarized statement. And we introduced a third marker which is an X. We're seeing this happen around the country right now. A lot of people do not identify as simply a man or simply a woman. The umbrella term for this is called non-binary and non-binary people overwhelmingly would like to have a different marker than M or F on their ID documents. So, we saw the first two X's go on to birth certificates in New Mexico last Wednesday as well, too. So, it was a really like life altering experience to me to see how you can do these things you know, even when you don't know what you're doing, you can do these things and then see how it's going to affect people for a long time to come right.

So, the last thing we do is education actually since whenever I wrote that stupid bio, I have now done this training more than 1200 times easily in 10 years for every conceivable type of group. So, we do lots of students, teachers, professors, employers, medical professionals, behavioral health clinicians, first responders, public safety, law enforcement. Corrections, lots of corrections folks. Last week I went up and trained the Cadet class for the State Police. We're training all of the cadet classes for APD now. We've trained all the Albuquerque Fire Department. We do quarterly trainings at UNM hospital for the staff over there. We're doing quarterly trainings with Presbyterian Hospital and faith communities, social groups.

Really anyone who will let us come train, we train. So, all of those trainings have been done by invitation. So, after tonight, if you like this and think you know another group who would let me come do it, please feel free to take my card because I just need you to help me facilitate it and we will come and do it. We want to come train. And I have a new trainer that I'm starting to delegate to, as much as it pains me to do that. Nonprofit founders are not skilled delegate, right. It's a little pathological personality profile, and he's amazing and he's bilingual. He's from Mexico and he's translated the deck into Spanish so for the first time we can offer this training as a Spanish language training. I've never been able to do that before. So, just think about that if there's somewhere that we could plug in and do this training, we really want to do that. We always want to do it.

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Slides:

['Icebreaker', then baby picture]

Oh, I'm sorry I don't have time for this, that's a tease, yep, nope, not doing that, it takes too long. Oh, look babies! Don't be sad about the ice breaker, here's the baby! Babies are better than ice breakers. I love babies too much. My baby, actually it's so funny that Moss was my baby's third grade teacher who now just turned 15 last week and is right now in driver's ed school. Can you stand it? He's like this tall, he's all big and stinky, he's not cute like that at all anymore. He's totally cute to me, I'm the dad so what are you going to do right? But he's like a baby giraffe now, so I love little tater tot babies like this. So, we're going to look at them and then we're going to just talk a little bit about it and then we're trying to kind of limit the room talk because of the video but I still want to hear a couple of just opinions about this when we get done.

Video

[music, images, and text: Is this a boy or a girl? Are these girls' toys? Boys' toys? How much are gender 'differences' created by the way we treat boys vs girls? The experiment - take some boys and girls and swap their clothes. Marnie becomes Oliver, Edward becomes Sophie. Give them some toys and a volunteer adult to play with them and see what happens.]

Adult (one of several): Look at this. Would you like a dolly? You're a good little girl, aren't you Sophie? Look, what does this say? Sweet dreams, sweet dreams.

Text/narrator: The adult offers 'Sophie' a doll and soft toys.

Adult: Look at this, Sophie.

Text/narrator: Note the toys that teach spatial awareness or physical confidence.

Adult: Meow, meow, purrr purrr. I think she liked that pink dolly the best.

Reporter: If I were to tell you actually that Sophie is Edward.

Adult: Aaaah!

Reporter: Does that change anything?

Adult: I maybe thought, 'this is a little girl, so I have to give her little girl things'

Text/narrator: Men hugely dominate career prizing maths, spatial awareness and physical confidence. Are boys born 'better' at these? Is it nature or is it nurture?

Adult: What's this one (with Marnie/Oliver)? What's that one do? Is that a robot? Ah - you like that one! What does this one do? Oliver, Oliver.

Reporter: You've gone for, you could say, boy toys.

Adult: Possibly, possibly in my subconscious but, for me, I was just going for what was around me but then perhaps my subconscious was just automatically playing a trick on me.

Reporter: If I tell you that he is actually a girl

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Adult: Really?

Reporter: Yes

Adult: Oh, wow! That's really interesting. I suppose it's because of the stereotype.

Reporter: And then that changed your behavior toward the child'

Adult: Yes it did. I can't lie, it did.

Reporter: And your behavior was quite directive.

Adult: One two three (puts Marnie/Oliver on tractor)

Text/narrator: When children play spatial awareness games frequently their brains change physically in three months.

Adult: Do you want to see my robot?

Reporter: She's picked out the robot, the car, the puzzle game. And I think she's being much more physical in handling the child than the other adults have been with girls. (Adrien comment: Although, in fairness, she(the adult)'s the youngest)

Text/narrator: The biases were shown by both male and female volunteers.

Adult: That really astounded me because I thought I was somebody that had a really open mind

Adult: Surprise. I automatically went for the pink, fluffy toy because I assumed it was a girl. It shows I was stereotyping

Adult: I've always thought I was rather more open-minded than that and I would think these are children's toys, whatever the gender'

Adult: It will make me think, the next time I'm with a child, my niece or my nephew, to make sure that I'm actually being fair and equal with all of them. And just giving each child an opportunity to be whoever they are.

Adrien:

All right what do you all think about that? What jumped out for you? [*inaudible audience comment*] Alright colors, colors. Do you all actually know that pink and blue were opposite for a real long time? You can look at articles from Good Housekeeping magazine from a hundred years ago that show that pink was considered to be this very active sort of energetic masculine color and that sort of baby blue was a soothing like sweet sort of female color. The story I've heard and somebody can correct it if you want, I don't know, but the story I've heard is that it was Sears department store in the 1950s who printed a catalogue that switched them and now we just think this is some kind of ancient DNA encoded information, you know. When really we, we are gendering these things these things do not have a gender.

Audience member:

*[I've noticed, I worked with small children for a long time, that a lot of the boy toys require more fine motor skills at an earlier age and teach more specific [*inaudible*] skills instead of playing house]*

Adrien:

Yeah, we're going to talk about that in a second here.

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Audience member:

[The choices based on appearance. How the child was presented to the volunteer was guiding their interaction]

Adrien:

That's exactly right. Which is very interesting, right. Because of course those people didn't know those babies or it wouldn't have been even the kind of loose experiment. It's not really an experiment. They use that word to mean they changed some variables to see what would happen, but it wasn't science. It's a piece of media, you know, that the BBC made, we get that. But it wouldn't have even been an experimental kind of interaction if they knew the babies or even if the babies could talk right. They had to use pre-verbal babies because we don't know what they might have been like, 'lady, I'm a boy, like why are you doing that?' You know, like that one kid that kind of gives her that side-eye when she's like 'grrrrr' he's like, 'mee maw, stop you know I'm trying to look at this robot right.' So it's funny the way she won't even let him. He goes and picks up the robot and she still won't let him do it. She goes after him with the little caterpillar you know because she's just so intent on what he looks like to her. But I find it fascinating that all the people in this video uses the word stereotype, right. The people, we get to see however they edited this, the people we see all use the word stereotype and all express some form of dismay that they stereotyped. Like none of them are like, 'what's the big deal, like that's what you do,' you know. They were all like, 'Oopsies! Like, I didn't really mean to do that,' right.

My favorite woman by far is the one who's like, 'no, no, like I just picked up what was near me!' I love her. Because every time I watch this, so many times that music haunts my dreams, I'm telling you, but every time I watch her I think you know, yes she is me, like she's my stand-in. Because I feel like most of us would do that, you know. And we watch her in like 40 seconds go through every one of the like kubler-ross stages of grief about, what just how, you know, she's like in denial of and she's angry and then she's an acceptance. And it's like, I'm like that's exactly what I would do. I would have walked in there I would have sat down, I would have stereotyped that baby. They would have told me that I did it I would have immediately tried to sort of backpedal away and be like, 'no no no, I didn't do that and then, okay, you were videotaping me, I did, I did do it.' You know she actually says, 'I can't lie I did it.' You know she, like, wants it to be not true so bad but then she has to be like, 'but I did do it, I really did.' And so I watch her and think yeah no I know that's what I would do, too.

Because gender norms are acculturated into us from the earliest possible age. Every single culture has gender norms and every single culture teaches its gender norms to babies. In the US right now, in the dominant culture of the US, we're actually doing this before the babies, even more so we are hitting them with the gender norms while they're even just still fetuses right. So, how then could we not do that? How could we not do that now? I'll tell you the hopeful thing to me is there is not one single universal gender norm. There is not one behavior or garment or role that has universally been masculine or feminine among human cultures throughout human history. So, for me that's really hopeful. It means this is the part of it that we're making. We make these things and we can make them different. Gender norms change over time whether we like it or not. There are a lot of people who are like, 'we should just keep it the way it is. A man is a man and a woman is a woman and why do we have to have it all change all the time?' But guess what, it already did change right. European men used to express masculinity by wearing high-heeled shoes and powdered wigs. So, guess what, gender norms change right. Like it's not like something you can stop. So, if it's gonna change anyway why don't we try to change it in a good way right. I think our most dangerous cultural norm around gender is misogyny right. We are a violently misogynistic culture. Why is it that the most degrading humiliating inflammatory thing you can say to a man, is some version of, 'you're a woman, you are a woman, you do something like a woman, or you are gross ugly words for women's body parts.' And we've bought into this so much that you will hear women say these things to men to degrade them. That does not reflect well on us right.

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This is not good. What do we think about women if we think that's the most insulting thing you can say? That's bad. We can stop. We can just stop. We can change it so is it getting better or not. People always want me to say it's getting better and I do think it's getting better, I guess. Look at this and I start to freak out because these two ads

Slide

[two Lego ads]

Adrien:

are from 1977 and they were published in such fringe magazines as Good Housekeeping, Parents, McCall's, Family Circle, and Redbook. They're part of a series of print ads that Lego published that year. There are about six more that are boys, but I pulled these because they're making my point. So, it's a mixed series of ads of boys and girls all dressed in these sort of gender-neutral clothes having made something out of Legos and being like, 'look what I did,' right. 1977.

Slide:

[Image on slide of a Lego building]

Adrien:

This is from a line of toys that Lego is introduced with in the 2010s. It is called Friends Legos. It is the only Lego product that is explicitly marketed to girls, which I think is a very strong message. That all the rest of the Lego universe, then is for boys. But all the rest of the Lego universe is just really awesome crap like Star Wars and Harry Potters and ninjas and pirates and castles stuff that. Girls like, I think, girls like Star Wars. If they don't, don't tell me okay. Girls like Star Wars. I'm sticking with it okay. This is a beauty parlor that you make out of Legos. Also I will say that I do not like that the little figures are radically different from any other Lego figures. Lego people are called minifigs and they're rectangles with little heads that pop on and off these, um, have boobs. And Lego minifigs have articulated wrists and these ones, the wrists don't turn. I know, I know, right. And also they're wearing real short skirts for some reason. I don't, I find this disturbing, you know. I don't know, why can't Legos just be for everybody?

And then we wonder why we can't engage women in STEM careers and this is the Legos we sell them, right. Oh, by the way, I didn't give you all the trigger warning but I talk about genitals a lot. So, that's just coming, so buckle up for that. We're going to talk about genitals, okay. When I was a child I did not dream that my adult professional life would be so taken up and talking about where people get to pee and poo and also genitals. But I will say that the seven-year-old in me is delighted, I still find it hilarious, and I was talking about this earlier. This is my new like love/hate web site that a friend of mine sent me. It's a, it's a web site with a hundred and fifteen unnecessarily gendered products and only the captions make my life go on to be worth living. Because the pictures make me want to like put a fork in my eyeball real bad. This is, this was photographed at the New York University Bookstore. If you can't see it the onesie, the baby onesie on the left says 'I hate my thighs' and the one on the right says 'I'm super' and it has a cape it's actually a little superhero costume onesie. So, there you go.

I will say in this room we have the remedy. I don't get any kickbacks and I'm always pushing her line of wonderful baby and children's clothes which is called Baby Blast-off. If you don't know Baby Blast-off, figure it out. Go look it up on the web. She's at the farmers market downtown but also in some other stores, is that what you told me, some other stores around town they're carrying the products. So, Baby Blast-off is a wonderful local company that makes onesies and t-shirts and things that are very much gender blended. They're, they're purposefully either non-gendered or blended so they have wonderful little graphics on there like, you know, a light bulb or a banana or the world or a bicycle. I think stuff that is clearly for everybody right. And where they're more gendered

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there, they're mixed right. Like the dinosaur stuff, I don't know if you still do the dinosaur stuff that was my favorite. So, the dinosaur things, like the kind of more like carnivorous dinosaurs are usually pink and lavender like clothing and the like little herbivores are blue right. So, it's like the more ferocious ones are in girl-girl colors there right and the others like those sort of gentler dinosaurs are in the boy colors. So, it's really cool whenever anybody I know has a baby I send them something from Baby Blast-off and I swear she's not even paying me okay.

This is Sylvia:

Slide:

['People have to understand that people are people. We just want to be ourselves' - Sylvia Rivera]

Adrien:

...and I do this actually when you're not even in the room. I just wants you to know that I actually like shill for Baby Blast-off unsolicited everywhere that I go okay. Because I have got to, I can't live like that. I can't live in this world right. We need more Baby Blast-off. We need Baby Blast-off in every city. Why are people not making these things right?

Sylvia is a transgender hero. If you don't know who she is I would urge you to look her up later. Even just looking at her Wikipedia page will tell you more about her. She was a very fierce and radical trans and anti-racist activist in New York City until she died there in 2003. She was documented as much as they could document anything in those few days. But she was a known participant in the Stonewall riots and she just, and that was like the least of what she did. She did a lot of very amazing work for LGBT people. She was part of a group called the Young Lords in New York. She just did a lot of really great things she was very [inaudible]-forward. She was very radical. So, she was one to really tell the truth even to the sort of mainstream gay movement in her time. So, she wasn't everybody's favorite but she's my favorite and you should look her up. There's even videos of her just like fierce and out, you know, at gay pride. So, check her out, she's well worth knowing. Most people that I train have never ever seen her picture or heard her name so I just like to put right up in front.

All right, true or false. Is this the functional definition of transgender? 'Your internal gender is just what you know to be true about yourself on the inside. Your designated sex at birth is whatever they said about you on the day that you were born.' And I will give you this hint because I'm trying to create kind of a shame free zone here. This is a little bit of a trick okay so what do you think? Come on, people, meter's running.

Audience member :

[maybe it's not 'opposite']

Adrien:

Yeah you're so good, if I had candy I'd give you some. Sometimes I'm a candy briber but not tonight. Sorry for the tease. Okay, yeah. That's the only reason it's a trick question. Because for me this definition is perfect if we didn't have the word opposite in it. I would switch out 'opposite' for 'different from' or 'not the same as' and then it works beautifully right. A trans person is just very simply a person whose internal gender does not match up with the sex they were designated at birth. It definitely doesn't have to be opposite. In fact there's really not even two kinds of people when we talk about our bodies. I'm going to talk to you in a little bit about intersex folks so even when we talk about our biological sex characteristics, we do not sort neatly into two categories.

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There are seven billion plus people on the planet right now so the idea that we can be reduced into two flavors is really just a very asinine idea. It doesn't even make sense. It doesn't make sense even when we talk about silly things right. But humans love that. We love to say there's two kinds of people in this world because we love binary systems. And we like easy choices and we like easy classifications. And I think, you know, to be kind to ourselves, I think it's really just because we're still big old apes, you know. Like, there's some part of our brain that just wants this to be simple. If I can classify you kind of without thinking instantaneously then I can more easily sort out who you are gonna be to me, which is what I really care about right. Are we gonna mate, are we gonna fight, are we gonna be rivals, are we gonna be allies? And being able to easily categorize you as part of the unthinking unconscious process of sorting that out, so it's okay that that's from our past. But it's also 2019 and we have these big ol' fully developed prefrontal cortexes, so I think it's get over it time. And let's realize that there's more than two kinds of people you know. And stop even kind of doing it when it's you know even when it's not about gender.

I hear people say stuff all the time like, 'you know what, there's two kinds of people in this world. People who like dogs and people who like cats.' And I'm like wow, really? I think there's more. I just don't think that's right you know. But we can't even help that. We just do that. We just do, we just go to that kind of an idea you know. But there's definitely more kinds of people than men and women, even physiologically. So, certainly in terms of what we know about ourselves on the inside we cannot be sorted into two flavors.

So are some trans people opposite? Yes, I guess. I don't really love the framework, that male and female are opposite, so I kind of get caught up there you know. I don't know, but if you want to think of male and female as opposite than some of us definitely fit this. This would fit me alright. I was designated female at birth, but I've known that I was a boy since I was 2 or 3 years old. So, as soon as I knew that I was a human being I knew that I was a boy. I'm almost 50 years old now. I'm still here I'm still a man so my internal gender is male. My designated sex was female, so I guess you could say this about me right. But there's so many people that wouldn't fit that that we can't use this as the definition.

Now, are there non-binary people who don't use the word transgender for themselves? Of course there are. To me all of the terminology we're going to talk about tonight are really just nametags. They're identity words so they're name tags that people get to put on themselves. We don't get to put somebody else's name tag on or tell them that they're wearing the wrong name tag or this is really your name tag and this isn't, no. They get to call themselves whatever they want right. So, for me, I'm not saying every person who fits my definition has to use the word trans. What I am saying is that in our work at our Center the services that we offer, the policies that we write, the laws that we try to enact are considering everybody under that big umbrella of people whose gender and sex don't match. That is how we use the definition and it is important to note this because even in trans spaces I have heard people try to create hierarchies around this. I have heard especially older trans folks say, 'well I really don't believe someone's transgender unless they have surgery.' And we're like no this is transgender. Anytime that the gender and the sex aren't the same, that's transgender. And we need to be thinking about those people with every move that we make and not be trying to sort out who's more trans, who's really trans, who's not really trans. That's not for us to say. If somebody's brave enough to say that they're trans there is no test there is no test that you can give to prove that someone's trans. There is no test you can give to prove that they are not. So, what can you do, right. So, speaking of which, what about this?

Slide:
[True or False? The definition of transgender includes some kind of medical treatment or transition False! Not everyone wants, needs or can access treatment...]

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Adrien:

Yeah, no, right, come on. Now if some of us have medical treatment of course. Probably a lot of the people you've seen in the media and stuff have had medical treatment. I certainly have, duh. I just said I was designated female at birth. Hello, you do not grow an awesome beard like this without taking some hormones okay. I have been on hormone therapy for about 15 years. I had surgery on my chest also right around 15 years ago. For me those things were really critical steps on my personal journey. As an individual trans person I had a very angry unhealthy relationship to my body. I really hated my body the way that it was before. I did a lot of unsafe and unhealthy things because of how I felt about my body. I'm going to tell you later some statistics around transgender suicide attempt and it is just completely outrageous. Like, it's off the charts. And I am NOT the person who had the nerve to step right up to it and just do it all at one time. But I knew that I was very, very slowly dying by suicide. I knew that I was doing things every single day that we're gonna kill me. And I just really did not care. I just didn't care. I couldn't care about my body enough to take care of it. So, for me getting these medical treatments completely revolutionized the way that I feel about myself, the way that I relate to other people, the way that I relate to my healthcare. I'm a person who totally will engage in preventive screenings and healthier decisions and things now because I really want to live a long time right.

I said I'm a dad. I have a 15 year old kid and I want to live a long time. I want every day in my bucket that's coming, right. He lives here with me. His mom lives in California so my kiddo lives with me and my spouse who's his stepmother, you know. Goes to school here year-round so I've got to be alive for that. But also even when he graduates, if he leaves I want to see what he does. I want to see all the things he goes on to do. Plus I keep insisting he has to have a child at some point so I got to be alive for that. He's like I don't think I want to have any kids. And I'm like, yeah, no, you are so there's that.

We're definitely going to have to get our heads wrapped around that. Okay, so for me, medical treatment completely changed my life. And I have really good friends who would stand right here next to me and say I do not relate to one part of that. I'm transgender, I love my body, I don't feel bad about my body, I don't need to like do anything to my body. I'm already totally cool, I take care of myself already. So, the definition of trans cannot be that you have medical treatment when there are trans people who do not feel gender dysphoria and do not feel any need to do things to their body to be healed. And there are trans folks who want these things just as much as I did and they can't figure out how to get them. We would never exclude them either right. Insurance actually pays for these things more every single day, but we still have friends here in town who don't have insurance so what are you going to do, you know. Or what about people who live in Clayton and they can't find a provider who knows how to do this. So, we definitely wouldn't exclude the people who either don't want or can't get treatment from the definition of trans. All right what about this:

Slide:

[True or False? A transgender man is someone who was not designated male at birth but has an internal gender that is male.]

Don't be scared I'm going to tell you anyway I really want you to know these words though

Audience:

[True]

Adrien:

Yay, who's brave? That was so good. Yes, that describes me right. I was not designated male at birth. In fact, I was designated female at birth. But my gender is male. I am a man and I am transgender, so I am a transgender man. It's really hard. Not gonna 'duh' after that right, but shame free zone I didn't say 'duh.'

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Okay, so when we use these terms we are talking about the person's current and true gender. That is how we always talk about somebody and talk to somebody, is their gender right. And I think what happens, first of all I don't usually hear transgender men referred to as women. I have heard it, like any ugly thing you can imagine, I've heard it right. But typically I don't hear people call someone like me a female or a woman. It's just kind of rare but I frequently hear transgender women referred to as men or males or transgender males. I've been in these deep conversations like with nurses and they're like, 'we have a transgender male come onto our floor at the hospital and nobody knew what to do and blah blah blah.' And we get more into it I'm like, 'wait what you mean a trans woman?' And they were like calling the person a trans male. I was like, don't call her that why would you call her that right. But I think what happens actually is that we're still in a place in history where we get caught up on genitals and especially when we talk about trans women. I think it is just the first involuntary reflexive thought that pops into people's minds you say transgender woman or you see a transgender woman or there's a transgender woman in a movie and the very first thought that your brain can't even stop itself from having is basically, 'does she have a penis, does she have a penis, has she had surgery on her penis, penis, penis, penis, what's going down there, I just really want to know, right, I can't help it.' And here, let me give you this. Okay, here's a little, let me throw y'all a bone on that.

I have transgender friends who say that when they meet another trans person they wonder if that person's had surgery, okay. So, it is just involuntary. It doesn't matter, it's not shameful to have that thought. And is not going to hurt the person that you had that thought. So, just let the thought arise and let it pass, because what's going to hurt the person is what you do next. So, here's the pro advice on what to do next. Let it go, right. That person's genitals have not one single thing to do with you and the likelihood of you seeing their genitals is probably zero so therefore don't worry about it right.

Now I told you I trained correctional officers. I train people who absolutely not just see people's genitals but get all up in people's genitals every single day. And even there this paradigm is shifting. In North Dakota, which is one of the states that I work with, I went up to Bismarck to train their DOC folks a few weeks ago. Their policy in North Dakota right now is that only female correctional officers can do strip searches of trans female inmates, irrespective of surgical status. Because a woman should search a woman period right. Period. So, female correctional officers in North Dakota can do strip searches of trans female inmates. The rest of us can let it go. It does not matter right. We cannot be using genitals to gauge who's really a man and who's really a woman in our culture. If we use that as our criteria and then we would all walk around without pants on and, as you can see we, don't right? Like I have done 1200 of these trainings I have never one time started by coming to the front of the room and being like, 'hey everybody, good evening. Make sure you get some pizza and also, hey what do y'all's genitals look like? I just really need to know and could you just like sketch picture of your genitals and just hand it forward because I have to know what genitals you have. I mean if I don't know what kind of genitals you have how will I even know how to talk to you?' Like that sounds cuckoo nuts if I say that to you and you have people don't think it's cuckoo nuts to say that to a trans person. I don't want to know your genitals, actually. Please don't break my streak of 1,200 trainings without seeing anybody's genitals. Let not tonight be the night okay. We don't use genitals to know that information.

I have a male passport, I have a male driver's license, I have a male social security record. I show my driver's license all the time right. I show my genitals never. I went to the Grove and had lunch today. I didn't show anybody my genitals. Put gas in the car, no genitals right. So, clearly we're not using genitals to decide who's a man and who's a woman. So, let's get over the idea that we do because we don't, we don't assess each other that way. When you start law school and start with new classmates you don't say well I don't even know everybody's genitals so I know who's a man who's a woman in here. Like we don't really do that. But as soon as trans comes into it we think that all of a sudden it's important and we need to know right. So, it's just time to realize that it's, you can

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just forget about, it is not important. The way you know somebody's gender is what they tell you it is. Whatever they tell you it is, that's what you need to stick with. That is how you talk to somebody, that it's how you talk about somebody, is whatever they've told you to be true about them.

Slide:

[Social: Coming out to friends and family, New name/pronouns, Different clothing or other aspects of presentation (can include speaking, walking, mannerisms)]

Medical: Hormones, Surgeries, Hair removal

Legal: Name changes, Identity documents]

Adrien:

...and guess what, some people have surgery on their genitals. So, you're never gonna know anyway right. The quality of the surgery for trans women is so high that medical providers often do not know that they are looking at surgically constructed genitals. So, the truth is you really are never going to know. That person could have had surgery, they could not have surgery, and you're never gonna find out. So, we would just say don't get caught up in it right. Surgery on your genitals is not transition. And even now I hear really good hearted people say stuff like that. They'll say, 'well she has, you know, transitioned but she hasn't fully transitioned.' And what they mean is she hasn't had surgery on her genitals. And I always say, 'well, is she done transitioning?' Then she is fully transitioned, like, that's not the end zone. That's not like the tape and you like run across the tape because you got surgery on your genitals so now you've fully transitioned right. You transition whenever you're finished transitioning.

For me I had chest surgery, I had a hormone therapy for 15 years, I had a hysterectomy, I've legally changed my name, I've updated most of my identity documents. I'm actually leaving my birth certificate the way it is. I was born in Mississippi which is a tough state, but also that's the record of my birth. I'm a trans activist. I don't mind having that document say the way that it was for me, that's okay. For other people, it's not. For me, it is. That's my transition. I'm fully transitioned I'm 15 years into it. I'm fully transitioned right. And the bravest thing up here is the social piece, anyway. Surgery for trans people is not scary, it's a relief. Telling everybody that you love that you're trans and that you may be about to change your life or change your body because you're trans, that is terrifying. I was in my 30s when I came out as trans. I was fully independent and I was still so scared to tell my parents. I had no idea how they would feel about me or how they would treat me once I said that right. And I'm the lucky person. It's still unfortunately kind of rare in that everyone who loved me before still loves me now. But I have many many friends who lost everything in that moment right. For us that is the fearful part. Okay, what about this:

Slide:

[True or False? Transgender and non-binary people are a new thing]

Adrien:

No, of course not. This is not new right, and non-binary, too. I think non-binary is interesting is in the United States. Like, that tends to skew younger right. There are many older non-binary people but if you look at the graph of it more young people have non-binary gender identities. And I think it tells people my age and older to be like, 'oh god the young people, you know. They're just trying to be weird and make us learn new words. I hate new words why do we have to do this,' right, but this is not new.

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Slide:

[Image of six people]

Adrien:

There are indigenous cultures with words in their own indigenous languages for up to five and six different gender classifications, not two. There is pre-colonial history to all of this. This is not new, right. And these are some people we would think of more as binary trans folks. This is Albert Cashier. He fought as a male soldier in the American Civil War. I'm talking about the 1860s right. But most importantly for us he went on to live a male life even after the war because there's quite a few documented instances of women dressing as men to fight at Wars because of the power structure stuff right. But when we look back at Albert's story it's pretty clear that he conceived of himself as male and wanted to live his life as a man. And he did way before he could have ever accessed any kind of medical treatment. Probably never in his life did he meet another trans person. And yet he lived the way he felt all of his life right. Now the interesting thing about these folks is not one of them would have lived to hear the word transgender right. That is new the word transgender was coined in the 1970s and really popularized in the 1980s. So, that is new the visibility and awareness of trans people in the United States is new, trans people are not new, right okay what about this:

Slide:

[True or False? It is totally cool to use the word transgender as a noun, as in "my friend is a transgender"]

Audience member:

[who are those other people (in slide image)?]

Adrien:

I just don't have time, I'm so sorry. I love all those people more than I can even say but I've got to watch my time. I think I can do this for three hours just without even taking a breath, so just condensing. But I will gladly tell anybody, if you ask that question at the end I'll go back and tell them okay cuz we're gonna have Q&A. So, I love it if you ask that. Okay what about this, do we do this, why, what's wrong with that?

Audience member:

[Shouldn't matter]

Adrien:

Well, okay, that's a great thing right if you don't have a context for why you're just for having somebody as trans. I would say don't, right, like but tonight if you go home after this and say, 'wow we went to this transgender training and this transgender guy gave the training,' then that's not weird that you're identifying me as trans because I'm doing a transgender training, you know. Like, that's, there's a context that makes it not weird, right. But I've had people sometimes come up to me afterwards, we'll be, like, 'last week I went to lunch with my transgender friend.' I'm like, 'yeah like did y'all have some transgender food?' What's the point of this story of not really tracking, right, so you're right if it doesn't matter then don't say it because it's sort of almost like a virtue signaling or like I'm cool like I know people I know diverse people or something right but for me it's really the article when you say a transgender what's happening there

Audience member:

[You know, like Trump. You're saying they're not a person]

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Adrien:

Exactly, that's exactly right. You know I hate to use this word about human beings because it seems like it shouldn't even be possible, but the word I use is dehumanizing, right, because everybody has more than one identity attribute that makes us who we are. Trans is one attribute that a trans person has but there's so many others, right, so let's talk about, if you don't mind for me, racially, I'm a white person. I am a man in terms of my gender. I'm trans, I was born a US citizen so I'm a documented citizen. I think about that a lot when we work with the women in Cibola, right. These are undocumented trans people and the differences are really stark between having citizenship privilege and not having it. It's a big, it's a big attribute right now in our country. Right, I'm a dad, I'm in a little country band here in town, we're called A Band Named Sue. I have a bachelor's degree, I have disabilities. I'm a southerner, which is a really big thing to me like identity-wise. I do not mean Las Cruces, I mean Mississippi. I'm from a mixed class background so I mean, like, socioeconomic class, I've lived at different sort of points along that continuum throughout my life. Oh, English is my first and only language I find that pretty embarrassing. I've lived here for 25 years so, great job me. Okay, and I'm a New Orleans Saints fan. Just, don't, just keep it to yourself, just hold on, you don't need to say it just because it's bubbling up does not mean you have to let it out. Okay, I'm from Mississippi, I love my Saints, that's how it goes. All right, so look how there's 12 things about me up here and one of them is trans. I'm trans, I run a trans organization that I started, I go around the state and actually around the country teaching this material and coming out as a trans person. I am prominently trans but I'm also all these other things and so many other things that don't fit on a slide, right. I have many many identifying attributes that couldn't fit on one slide. We could do this all night long

Audience member:

[Would you put, if you were a straight male, put 'straight' like where you put 'trans?']

Adrien:

Well, I don't I don't put my orientation because I think it's confusing to people because, and let me just quickly break it down and I'm sorry if it's confusing. I'm just gonna say it to answer the question the question was would I put my orientation up there as straight or whatever my sexual orientation is. And I am a transgender man and my spouse is a cisgender woman so we are a couple where one person's a man and one person's a woman. So, typically that is identified as straight, culturally, and most of the men I know like me self-identify as straight and take a lot of pride in being straight. This is what they always knew they were and now they can be seen that way. But I don't like it when people mistake me for straight. I was raised by the lesbians. I was 20 years a lesbian before I started transitioning and so I'm not like giving out my rainbow card just because I look straight. So, for me and I, if I have to name my orientation I call myself queer, right, and I'm only attracted to female appearing people. But I used the name tag queer to signify not straight, you know, so I find that confusing. And because I know that so many people like me would say straight, and I'm the one who gets to speak to everybody. I don't, I don't like talking about being a queer person because I think it muddies the waters for all the straight people like me who are out there who would not want to be identified as queer just because they're trans, right. So, that's the only reason I don't put my orientation up there. And you'll notice my age isn't up there, you know, if I belong to any kind of a faith tradition it's not up there. My marital status is not up there. So, doesn't mean, really, if you do this all night long we can sit here for the rest of the night to do this y'all can all get out paper and we can do it for two hours. I mean this could go on indefinitely. Right.

So this is just the 12 things that I came up with and thought were kind of key to put up here to reach a lot of the different audiences that I reach, right. So, this slide also illustrates, so look, I'm trans but I'm not a trans. I'm a person who's trans and all this other stuff too, right, and this slide illustrates a principle that more and more we're hearing referred to as intersectionality. If you don't know that word that term was coined by a really brilliant woman named Kimberlé Crenshaw back in the late 80s and Kimberlé Crenshaw is a legal scholar. She teaches law at UCLA and Columbia and she's also a black woman so when she coined this term what she was

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trying to describe was the fact that even when we share an identity attribute we will not share the same outcomes in our dominant culture because of the other identity attributes that we have that we don't share. So, she was saying the dominant culture of the US is a violently sexist culture. But we cannot say that all women experience the same discrimination in the United States because the United States is also a violently racist culture. So, women of color are going to endure racial discrimination and gender discrimination where white women will almost certainly encounter some form of gender discrimination but not racial discrimination.

So we can't just say all women are having the same outcomes because then you think about women in the US who are HIV positive or women who are living in poverty or women who are undocumented or women who are trans, and each one of these groups is going to have different outcomes, right. Even though all women will experience some discrimination. I have folks who say, 'I don't think all women experience discrimination' and I'm like, 'oh really.' Like the people I can't stop thinking about are the US women's soccer team right now. I don't know who else was fixated on watching these women like kick the butt of every other soccer team on the planet of Earth this summer, but I was I was like compulsively watching them do this. And at the same time they were filing a lawsuit trying to get paid the right amount. This is a rarefied privileged elite group of female athletes and they were still experiencing gender discrimination so tell me that women don't experience gender. You know, like, yes they do but not the same. The trans woman at our drop-in center this afternoon are not experiencing the same discrimination as the US women's soccer team. They just don't, the intersectionality is what causes it to be better or worse, right. And my list is remarkable not because I have so much discrimination but because I don't. Right, I said for 20 years I was a butch lesbian before I started transitioning so what that means that I was a really masculine looking lesbian woman, right. And lesbians look like everything. Can't look like a lesbian right, I know you know that. There are very feminine looking lesbian women but I was not one of them. I wore all men's clothes, I had really short hair, people frequently could not tell if I was a man or a woman and they would get deeply disturbed by the fact that they could not tell if I was a man or a woman. So, I had a lot of weird things happen to me back then. I at least once had somebody throw something out of a moving car at me and a girlfriend walking down the, but the more consistent almost on an everyday basis I had somebody try to prohibit me from using a public bathroom. So, anytime that I would try to use a women's public bathroom somebody would tell me that I could not use it. Either someone inside the bathroom or even outside the bathroom would be like, 'hey wait you're going in the wrong bathroom you can't go in that bathroom,' until I had developed all these strategies about going in the bathroom. Even now I'll sometimes find myself holding it, you know, for long, way too long, right. And trans and gender variant people, this is a common experience. Trans students in schools actually tell us that they don't drink water all day long at school because they're trying so hard not to go to the bathroom. They're so afraid to navigate the bathroom that they don't take in fluids in the hopes that they won't have to go, right. Now, you think about how you participate in your school community and learn and do the social emotional and academic learning you're supposed to be doing at school if all you're thinking about all day is how to not go to the bathroom, right. I mean that's not cool, right.

But for me it was post-transition that all of this came to a stop. Because now the way people perceive me, no one ever ever ever tells me that I can't go to the bathroom. And, in fact, what I find in the last 15 years is that people kind of don't want to tell me anything about anything that I'm doing and even if I'm breaking a little rule, people don't want to have a confrontation with me. They don't want me to get all like pissed right. Customer service people are much more anxious to try to make sure I don't get aggravated or call for a manager. People treat everything that I say with more authority than they did before. People frequently assume that I'm the leader of any group that I'm in even if I'm totally not the leader of the group. And none of that used to happen before but I'm the same person. That's why we call this unearned privilege. Because I'm the same person so if it had anything to do with me then I would always have been treated this way.

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What it has to do with is how people perceive me now, based differently than how they perceived me then, right. Now I have a couple of vulnerable spots up here. I think being trans and being disabled are the places where I could still experience discrimination right now, and southerner, right. I don't know if I've experienced like discrimination for being southern but I've experienced total stupidity and prejudice on the basis of being from Mississippi you know. Which I don't think is the same thing as questioning whether Mississippi's a racist state or has terrible power structures. I think that's true but I've been asked things like are you married to your cousin and I'm like 'what? Are you married to your cousin? Why would you even think of that? I've had people tell me they didn't really believe I have a college degree. I'm like we have colleges in Mississippi what are you talking about?

All right it's weird but so I don't think I've had like discrimination, but I've had some weird experiences. But trans and disabled are totally marginalized categories. Now the thing about me is that the rest of my list is very protective right. And both of those things are invisible about me so I could experience employment discrimination as a trans person but I will never get beat up on the street for being trans because how would I be targeted in the first place right. And my disabilities are the same way. All of my disabilities tracked to a really bad car wreck that I had in 1996. I had about 13 different orthopedic surgeries that came from that. I have what's called a fifth-rate amputation on my right foot I'm paralyzed below the knee on the right side. I have a rod in my femur. I had iliac crest bone grafting out of both of my hips. My right leg is a little shorter than my left I have chronic pain every day and I have PTSD from that wreck. So, my family is aware that I deal with these disabilities but people that I work with for a couple of hours at the time don't really know that about me.

So that doesn't, I don't have the same outcomes that folks whose medical or behavioral health disabilities are more evident have much worse outcomes than what I have right. And then the trans community that's the folks who tend to have the worst outcomes are the people who have more marginalized identities. So, I talked about our direct service work earlier without somehow mentioning our drop-in center which is the facility we have here in town where we're serving these folks right every day. These folks come to the drop-in center to get food, to use a safe bathroom, to pick up their mail. We give away free monthly bus passes, we do rapid HIV testing, we have case management, we work with partner organizations to do medical care legal assistance counseling all under that one roof. And every day when we open up at 1:00 the people who come in and fill up the space are young trans women who are almost all folks of color who almost all have some type of disability. Whether or not they've been diagnosed with it doesn't change anything. They're almost all experiencing homelessness. They're almost all unemployed. Most of them don't have families who love them so they come there every day to get the only food they're gonna eat that day. And they are all trans and I am trans so we can't just be talking about trans right because I have a car and a home and a family and food every single day. Now I don't want to oversimplify. I will say that transgender men have problems. Trans men actually die by suicide at the highest rate in the trans communities, but trans women are vastly more likely to be murdered. So, when we think about societal discrimination and violence it's a really, really big disparity. And being visibly trans is the other sort of wrinkle here.

Slide:

[Can you tell who is trans? Pictures of six people]

So the spoiler is that everyone up here is trans. These are all trans people. And the reason I put this flag because this is clearly an awkward thing for a trans person to do. Like, hey scrutinize these people. See if you can pick out who's trans. Like that's weird you know, but my point is this. I trained a lot of folks and I've had many times somebody say to me I'm pretty sure I would always be able to pick out a trans person. I'm like yeah, no I don't think so, right. I understand what they mean because they have picked out a trans person before. But you've also been in a public place with a trans person that had no idea that they were there. You've been in a

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bathroom with a trans person, did not know that they were there right. There is no way that you can pick out every trans person there are trans women and trans men who blend in all day every day you would just never see us you wouldn't know we were there.

But there are also visibly trans people. So, the reason that happens I think has to several factors to it. The age at which you transition is key. Your genetics are a big factor. And then which direction you're going, right. Because when you look at the human sex hormones they just don't work the same way. Testosterone is the vastly more potent substance. For trans women who take estrogen they also have to somehow block or cease the production of testosterone in the body. So, you can surgically remove the gonads and then that's it, you're not making testosterone anymore.

Or you can take an additional medication. The hormone regimen for trans women is to take spironolactone, which is a testosterone suppressor, and estrogen. Because if you don't take this spironolactone and the estrogen can't feminized you. It can't do the things that it can do for trans men. We don't have to take an estrogen blocker because testosterone is an estrogen blocker that's it. That you just take it. I've been taking T, we call it T right. Not like tea. T for testosterone, for 15 years and the way I take my T is topically so it means I take this very small amount of lotion every day and rub it on my arm and, starting 15 years ago, I did all of this to me, rubbing that lotion on my arm right. My voice changed within two months, my periods had stopped, my musculature shifted, the fat distribution patterns on my body shifted, the texture of my skin changed, all of my body odors changed, my hairline changed, the shape of some of the bones in my face actually changed, I grew a lot of really unfortunate hair in a lot of super weird places. You know I was like whoa butt hair, I don't want that why do I have to have butt hair? I don't care for any butt hair, thank you. But that happened right. Thanks, T.

So if testosterone has already done these things to you and you're a trans woman some of them just can't go back the way they were. Your voice can never go back to the way that it was pre T right. So, some trans women actually take classes to learn how to speak in a way that is perceived to be more stereotypically feminine and they feel more confident for doing that. And then other trans women are like, 'no, I'm just gonna talk in my own voice,' right. But her low voice is gonna get her noticed. Hair loss and hair growth can't be turned around from estrogen right. If you can access laser hair removal or electrolysis and that's cool, some people can't right. You can never regrow their hair on your head so some trans woman I know feel more confident in a wig. But that may be the very thing that causes someone to notice, or is that she's wearing a wig and they can tell right. Skeletal frame is the other big thing. If you're very tall or you have really broad shoulders or large hands that attracts attention and again, I don't want to perpetuate the idea that only transgender women are large, of course. That's not true. All women come in all shapes and sizes. Especially we think of like female athletes, WNBA players, female Olympians right. Women can be any size but I think when women are bigger it attracts attention and once somebody's looking at that woman they are then zooming in and probably noticing other things about her. So, these women [in slide image] all transitioned younger in life and they also are just what a lot of my friends would call like genetically lucky. They just are more petite. They have finer features, they just didn't have as much of an uphill climb in terms of blending in. Not all trans people want to blend in so let's not take that as the goal, either. There are definitely trans people for whom blending in is not the priority. But there's also a lot of people who dearly want to blend in and they may not be able to. Okay, what does this mean?

Slide:

[Definitions: Cisgender

Cisgender: A person whose gender conforms with the sex they were designated at birth; i.e. not transgender]

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Adrien:

Exactly right. It means you're not trans right. That's the simplest way to put it. If you are cisgender you are not transgender. Okay now don't even start with me. I know I've just started with two kinds of people in this world scenario here. Okay it's a ... don't even start if you don't identify as transgender or cisgender, then that's your own business I guess. But if you are cisgender and you don't want to identify as cisgender I would ask you to look at that later go home and think a little bit more about it right. Like what's the problem? It's calling yourself cisgender if you're cisgender right. It's interesting that the dominant group doesn't like to be named right. We tend to have resistance so that cisgender actually doesn't focus group test well with cisgender people. Like that overarching feeling is like don't put a special label on me, man. We're like yeah that must feel so horrible for you right. Like, it's a value neutral term and the reason we need this is because we still hear 'normal' position is the opposite of trans way too much. And we believe being trans is normal. We think that what we're talking about here is a minority trait.

I genuinely believe that when we get accurate responsible estimates on the trans population we're going to turn out to be 3 percent. This is a minority trait and the thing about minority traits is that humans don't handle minority traits very well. We tend to be hostile and even violent to groups that have minority traits, unless we learn not to be. So, there are definitely groups we could all name they're still receiving horrible treatment for having a minority trait. But for me it's more interesting right now to think about the groups that once were treated badly but now aren't because it shows that we can learn right. My favorite example is red hair. So, people born with red hair are about 1.7 or 1.8 percent of the population, so I actually believe we're gonna find out there's more trans people than redheads. I really do think that. Know what we used to say about these folks?

Audience member:

[Gingers]

Adrien:

Well that's the nice thing. So, what we, you know we're going back golden oldies here, we used to say that redheads were possessed by the devil. We said that people with red hair did not have a soul and that they were dangerous because they would try to steal your soul because they did not have a soul. During the witch trials era of history, folks with red hair were accused of being things like vampires and witches. And if you were accused of being a witch you were going to be killed for it. Because what they would do is test you to find out if you were a witch. And the test was to drown you so the thought was if you're a witch you're going to use your evil magic powers to save yourself from drowning. So, if you died from the drowning you were innocent of being a witch and if you survived the drowning then you had proven that you were a witch and so they killed you right. Now, thirty percent of women who color their hair choose a shade of red. Clearly they would not do this if they thought we were going to drown them or kill them or burn them when they came out of the salon. Because we don't do that anymore. We just sit and work and be friends and family with red-headed people, side by side without even thinking too much about it. 'Ginger' is about the worst you hear anymore, and really is just remarking on it right. Ginger isn't in and of itself an insult.

It's just that we find minority traits remarkable. It's hard for us not to want to say something or name it or talk about it. But we don't talk bad about it. We just mention it right. Even 50 years ago we did some of the same things to left-handed people and they are a huge group. They are 10% of the population. Who's left-handed in here? 1 2 3 4 in a room this size, 5, 5 lefties in a room this size. Even 50 years ago there were who unironically said that left-handed people were possessed by the devil. The word sinister comes from the Latin word for left, which is *sinistra*. Teachers and schools would tie these kiddos' hands behind their backs in the classroom to force them to learn how to be right-handed. And nobody thought this was abusive. They thought it was helping to correct the child to

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be normal right. Now we don't do that. Now we make scissors and can openers and notebooks and desks and rifles and guitars so left-handed people can just live in a right-handed world. And you are never in your adult life going to be asked to sit through an hour and a half PowerPoint training with videos to learn why you should not be mean to left-handed people, why God does not hate left-handed people, why it is normal to be left-handed, why left-handed people are not possessed by the devil. Because you don't need a PowerPoint for that and I really think that in 50 or 60 years there won't be anybody doing my job either. These slides will be in an archive somewhere. We'll be like, 'wow y'all can you believe we used up to have to teach people that?' And part of the way we're gonna get there is value neutral language right. I would never come in here and say oh you're left-handed, I'm normal, sorry. Like, we just say left-handed and right-handed. It's just two things you can be, who cares. Cisgender and transgender, right, both are normal.

Slide:

[What is sex?]

Adrien:

Oh boy, seems like it's gonna get exciting right now, but it's not.

Slide:

[Basic Concepts: Sex (assigned at birth). For transgender people, it's often important not to use phrases like 'biological sex' or 'born a boy/girl' - male - female - intersex (formerly hermaphrodite)]

Adrien:

So your designated sex at birth is just really based on your genitals, right. That is how we sort babies, is genitalia. It is not biological sex. People sometime try to tell me that like we sort babies by their biological sex. We do not. Biological sex includes your gonads, your hormones, your chromosomes. I was in the room when my kiddo was born and not one person tested his chromosomes. They looked at his genitals they said he's a boy. They put it on his birth certificate. That was it. It was over and I'm not mad. Like, that's, that's how we do it, that's fine. But let's be clear, that is a very simple single criterion that we are using to designate the sex of babies because when we talk about biological sex we get more complicated than that. Intersex people who, by the way, do not want to be called hermaphrodites, if you know the word hermaphrodite today is the day to lose it. The word is intersex because intersex people have taught us that and all that it means is that they have some type of physiological trait that does not sort neatly into our typical definitions of male or female. People often think of intersex folks as having both and that is just almost unheard of. You can see things like ambiguous genitalia and an intersex person something more that's like in-between but you can also see intersex variations that are just things like atypical chromosomes some people have what's called mosaic genetics and it means that some of their cells have XX chromosomes and some of their cells have XY in their one body and you can't even see it. There are people walking around with intersex variations and they don't even know it about themselves. So, this can be very subtle which, again, for me means population numbers are iffy. How can we get a good count if not even every intersex person knows if they're intersex, right. I'm not intersex as far as I know so I'm going to let these people tell you all.

Video

["What it's like to be intersex"]

4 people on screen. Raise your hand if you have testes (one person raises their hand).

I'm Pidgeon

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I'm Alice

I'm Emily

I'm Saifa

And we are intersexy

-What does intersex mean?

Intersex describes a person who doesn't fit the typical definition of male or female.

-they may have variations in their gonads, chromosomes, or genitalia

I have XY chromosomes but typical female genitalia

I'm a girl who has testes and XY chromosomes

I identify as a queer gender non-conforming intersex person

I identify as a black intersex man

-1 in 2000 people are born intersex

Intersex is not new it's been around since the beginning of human existence. I mean, there's probably even intersex dinosaurs, if you think about it

-Is intersex the same as transgender?

Transgender has to deal with your gender identity, whereas intersex has to deal with your biological characteristics

Often intersex people get surgeries that they don't want, and transgender people have to fight for surgeries that they do want

-Doctors often perform 'normalizing' surgery on intersex people without medical reasons

They gave my mom the excuse that the internal testes were cancerous, that I would develop cancer.

They didn't even come up with an excuse, basically, in terms of a health-related reason. They, instead, just said it was about the appearance.

A lot of doctors are very uncomfortable with the idea that I have testes, and they're still trying to get them removed. But I'm perfectly healthy and there's nothing wrong with them.

-Medical records are often kept secret from intersex people

They did a surgery to remove my testes, and told my parents to take me home and just raise me as a girl. I didn't find out about it myself until I was 12.

There aren't a lot of options or medical providers don't explore other options.

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-Doctors removed Saifa's testes at age 13 because they 'may cause cancer' even though he always identified as a boy

My mom would put me in dresses and she would be like, 'aren't you so cute, you're so pretty.' And I would be like, 'No, this is horrible!' I was put on hormonal treatment which consisted of estrogen and progesterone

-Saifa confirmed to his assigned female identity until the age of 25

I just wanted to belong, I wanted to fit in. I didn't want to be different. So, even though I knew something felt amiss, I conformed.

-Saifa recently met with the doctor who removed his testes. The doctor had no regrets about the operation

He was very condescending. He was like, 'you intersex activists don't know what you're talking about.'

-these unnecessary surgeries still occur today

It's difficult for intersex people to find each other because from an early age, we're told not to talk about our bodies.

I did feel like I was the only one.

My doctors always told me there was nobody else like me. And so, it just perpetuates a vicious cycle of shame and stigma that we can't break out of.

-What message would you give to an intersex person?

I would tell another intersex person that you are worthy. You are loveable.

Your body is beautiful, you're beautiful.

Intersex people don't need to be fixed. There's nothing wrong with them.

I know you feel like you might not be able to get through this. I know you might have really dark thoughts. But I want you to know that meeting other intersex people and finding a community or a support group can be one of the most important aspects in your healing process. And we're out there, we're out here. We're here. I just hope you can find us.]

Adrien:

So I know that's hard, like, it's really hard for most people that watch that video and think that we're doing these surgeries on babies that they are obviously begging us to stop doing so. I just want you to know that they're making great headway. Intersex activists have gotten a bunch of prominent medical associations to come out against these surgeries. There are countries that have already outlawed these surgeries including Malta. They've gotten three former US Surgeon Generals to collaborate on a paper condemning these surgeries. So, the work is being done.

Slide:

[Basic Concepts: Gender -Gender (internal) - Gender Expression - endless combinations]

Adrien:

It's really important to know that and I think the most important thing for trans folks would also help intersex people. And that's if we learned, culturally, that your internal gender is a separate trait from your designated sex. And we just don't know that. Right now we think if a baby's born and we go it's a girl then, just, it's a girl. But that's what they said about me and I was never a girl. Your

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designated sex is one thing about you. Your gender is a separate thing about you, even if yours match, right. Mazel Tov if yours match. It's wonderful, you're cisgender, how great, right. But they don't match for everybody so they can't be one thing. The analogy that I always make is actually hair color and eye color because the interesting thing about human beings is that on every continent around the world the most common combination is brown hair and brown eyes. But we don't think that they go together, nobody try to do surgery on my blue eyes to make them brown so that everything's brown. No, we know they're two separate things and the fact that a large majority have matching values, this just it just is that way but it doesn't make it compulsory.

Your gender is what you know about yourself and, speaking of medical groups, even the American Academy of Pediatrics has now released a statement saying that we know our gender between the ages of three and five, and they were talking about trans people, right. I think it's true for you all, too. But they were saying that when we talk as little kids about knowing our gender when we're trans, we were right. We know our gender. When I say I was three years old and knew that I was a boy, I did, right. Now, are there trans people who don't know at three, of course. There are, of course, there are there are people who don't come to this realization until puberty hits or until way later in life. And they are real and they are valid and it's all good. But a lot of us can go back and tell you we knew this very young.

Slide:

[Diversity: -Being Transgender does not mean that you are assigned a label or category or that you wish to conform to the gender binary. - Many people, especially younger urban transgender people, are embracing identity terms like non-binary (also NB or ENBY), genderqueer, agender, gender fluid, bi-gender, gender non-conforming and more]

Adrien:

Gender expression is a third separate thing and that's how you present your gender to the outside world. This changes over time. It changes from cultural group to cultural group. What we call a skirt in the US and Scotland is called a kilt. And it's not just a man thing to wear it, kilts. It's like a macho man thing, right. But here in the US most of us guys don't rock a lot of kilts because we call it a skirt we're all freaked out. Somebody's gonna walk up to you and be like, 'hey, Debby, I like your skirt.' Then we're gonna be embarrassed, right. So, here we think of it as a female garment but a piece of fabric wrapped around your waist cannot be male or female. It is your cultural group that teaches you how to read these things.

When we talk about internal gender not everybody fits into the two categories. You all just bear with me a couple more minutes, you're doing great. I really want to show you this quick two-minute video and then I've got to show you this data slide and then we can close it out, okay. But I don't want to not show you this because I'm pretty binary so here's some non-binary people.

Video

[This is what non-binary looks like]

I'm Fox, and this is what non-binary looks like

I'm Owl, and this is what non binary looks like. We don't necessarily expect you to know what that means, but let us explain.

I was assigned female at birth.

I was assigned male at birth. While many people understand what it is to be a trans man or a trans woman, being non binary is still very misunderstood.

Being non binary means we identify as neither a man or a woman.

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What makes us men, women or non-binary is an inner sense of self.

It's not what genitals we have, what we wear, or who we're attracted to.

It's who we are - which is something no one can take away from us.

Gender identity and gender expression are two different things.

The fact that I present as feminine

The fact that I present as masculine

does not make us any less non binary

It's just clothes, it's just presentation, it's just a form of expression

Non binary people have always existed and they do so in cultures all around the world.

Non binary people do not want to erase your identity as a man or a woman.

All non-binary people want is to be respected and acknowledged for who they are.

Non binary people are real, authentic, and express themselves in so many different ways. We are legally recognized in countries such as Malta, New Zealand, Australia, Nepal, and more.

We encourage all non-binary people to share their selfies under the hashtag #this is what non binary looks like

The hashtag is already well and truly under way and it's a real inspiration for us all.

I'm Owl, and this is what non binary looks like.

I'm Fox, and this is what non binary looks like.

Adrien:

So guess what non-binary looks like. Everything, that's the point right. And then folks hear non-binary and imagine that everyone that wants to appear androgynous. And as you can see some of these folks appear androgynous and others don't. Non-binary is what you know about yourself on the inside. How you present it is a separate thing and the fourth and final separate thing is your sexual orientation okay.

Slide:

[Basic Concepts: Sexual Orientation - Gay - Lesbian - Straight - Bisexual - Asexual - Pansexual - Queer]

Adrien:

Because if you know that someone's trans you still do not know which one of these they are. Just like if I know that someone's a woman I do not know which one of these they are. And I think we have made this a little confusing because we're the ones going 'LGBT' you know 'LGBT' we just makes it all sound like one thing. How about trainees be like, 'isn't it just kind of all gay?' I'm like no come on there are gay trans people there are straight trans people there are bisexual trans people and there are lots and lots of cisgender gay and lesbian people. It's not connected there's no connection between them right okay. Let me show you this data I'm sorry to end on because it sucks

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Slide:

[-3.4% positively identified as transgender, gender fluid or genderqueer

-2.9% unsure

-35.4% unstable housing vs. 3.9% for cisgender

-31.3% attempted suicide in last 12 months vs. 8%

19.4% ever used heroin vs. 1.2%

13.7% had at least 10 drinks on a single occasion in the past 30 days vs. 3.8%

21.4% ever forced to have sexual intercourse vs 7.1%]

Adrien:

This is from the New Mexico youth risk and resiliency survey. This keeps me up at night really bad. They do that New Mexico youth risk and resiliency survey every two years. So, right now they are administering the same survey to our high school students all over the state of New Mexico in public high schools. For the very first time in 2017 we added the question about being trans and what we really wanted to know was that the kids were not cis but you can't say are you not cisgender on the survey. It's like the worst survey question ever constructed in the history of survey questions. Plus they really might not know what cisgender means so to get at that umbrella definition of trans we said do you consider yourself transgender genderqueer or gender fluid. 3.4% of our public high school students surveyed just absolutely said yes I do I definitely think of myself that way. They were in every single county of our state every county. 2.9% more said something's going on with me about this but I'm not sure what to call it yet. They did not mean I don't understand the question because unfortunately we had a high rate of response to that. We had about 15 percent who said I don't really get what you're asking me right. So, this year you can't change the question because we need to validate the question against the question but they added a better introductory paragraph to this year's survey to explain these words a little bit better and hopefully reduce that 15 percent and get responses from that group of yes or no right.

The unsure group here though is definitely part of the group in my opinion. And we can see it because their outcomes were also horrible. This line here is unstable housing and so what we saw was the cisgender students reported unstable housing at the time of taking the survey at a three point nine percent rate. For the trans group up there it was thirty five point four percent. And for the unsure group it was forty point one. So, the trans and the unsure groups had nine to ten times more unstable housing than the cisgender.

And I'm an amateur when it comes to, to statistics and data. But to me I cannot believe that that is not correlated. And they actually added a question this year about were you kicked out of your home or run away from home within the last twelve months. So, we're gonna be able to see at this time this is happening because they are in this group. It's not just a coincidence right. Now the rest of these bullets only compare the three point four to the cis because I guess someone could argue that the two point nine percent aren't part of it. And I really believe they are, but this is just the three point four versus cis. Look at it, look at suicide attempts. These are our children in New Mexico who are in high school and they're taking the survey. On surveys like this suicide attempt means you actively tried to kill yourself but you survived. Look at sexual violence how do we live with either one of those numbers? I cannot comprehend that 7% of our cis students would say yes to that. And then look at heroin right. That has nothing to do with heroin, that

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is all about maladaptive coping mechanisms for the rest of all this crap that's happening right. These are kids taking the survey that's why this one just gets to me right because the national data was the same.

Slide:

[National Center for Transgender Equality 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey:

- Disproportionate discrimination and violence in all areas*
- 30% reported experiencing homelessness at some point*
- 12% within prior year - because of transgender status*
- 3X the unemployment of the general population - 4X unemployment for people of color]*

Adrien:

Trans people of color experience the most violence and discrimination. The largest survey of trans people ever conducted is the US Transgender Survey. 28,000 of us all across the country took this survey and the outcomes were just all so bad, really bad. Sexual violence was off the charts and suicide attempt for the adults was also just totally out of control.

Slide:

[4.6% vs 40% - Lifetime suicide attempt rate for general population vs. transgender population

0.6% vs. 7% - Suicide attempt rate for general population vs. transgender population in the last year]

Adrien:

Right this is hard data because when we show this one of the big oppositions I get to this whole thing is that being trans is a mental illness. That's what people say to me, right. They'll say this isn't real this is a mental illness and we're treating it like it's a real thing, but it's actually just mental illness. So, when we show this it's hard. If people are like, 'see I told you they were mentally ill look at this,' right. But we know that's not true because this number comes down when people have the love and respect of their families of origin. And the number comes down when they have strong social supports of any kind. And it comes down when they have access to quality capable medical care. So, we know this isn't about being trans. It's about the way people treated trans people that has these numbers so far apart and that someday they'll just be one number. This won't always be a disparity right and then I have to look at Laverne, that makes me sad, so here's Laverne it makes me feel a little bit better.

Slide:

['It is revolutionary for any trans person to choose to be seen and visible in a world that tells us we should not exist" - Laverne Cox]

Adrien:

Right there's trans people, amazing fabulous gorgeous trans people, doing amazing things right in the middle of all of this, too. So, this is why we do our work. We're gonna make sure that these numbers change. I really believe it won't always look this way, I truly believe that. And part of that is just even being willing to come on a weeknight and be part of an educational program like this so that you can also just do a better job, helping to improve safety and access for trans people wherever you can in your day to day life. So, I just really, really appreciate you all being here. Thank you so much for being here.

[Applause]

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QUESTION AND ANSWER

Adrien:

Now we're going to do Q&A

Audience member:

[I'm not sure I can even ask this question in a clearer way but we started off looking at children where there were assumptions being made that were supposedly gender based so my question is what does internal gender mean if it doesn't mean association with the cultural assumptions about what a man is like or what a woman ... what]

Adrien:

For me honestly that is the question. That is the most interesting and also unanswerable question. Like, I genuinely do not know right. How do I know that I'm a man how does anyone in here know that you're a man or a woman? Like, what's the one thing you would offer me that's that's not debatable that proves that you're a man or a woman? I know, right. And sometimes people go, 'well I have a vagina or whatever.' That's fine, that's often the first kind of thought, 'I have a vagina I'm a woman.' But there are cisgender women born with what's called vaginal agenesis right. There are cisgender women born without vaginal openings. There are cisgender women who don't have uteruses. There are cisgender women who can't give birth. There are cisgender women who don't have breasts. So, we can't go to the body parts because they will fail us even with cis people.

And if we can't define gender by body parts then the only thing we can possibly say about it is it's just this very deep I believe innate knowledge of who we are because it can't be based in gender norms. Because I know trans people that are every kind of people. I have friends who are transgender men like me who are gay drag queens. So, they are clearly not saying I want to be a stereotypical man based on the gender norms of masculinity in our culture. But they're saying I know I'm a man, the kind of man I am is a gay drag queen right. For me I'm not a gay drag queen. I'm like straight and not a drag queen and like to wear a beard and buy all my clothes in the men's section, whatever the hell that means right. But there's every different kind of trans man and trans woman, so to me this is the question that has no answer really it really truly is just what we know.

Audience member:

[Well it seems as we begin to soften the edges around what it means to be a man or a woman then we have a whole continuum of what gender might mean, right?]

Adrien:

Yeah I think that's what happens when we embrace people who talk about being non-binary. We're starting to pull the threads a little bit right. But one of the interesting questions, it's a corollary to this and I don't know if this is your thoughts so not, this is not on this person, but I want to just say this since we're on this track as I sometimes get asked things like if we had a culture that wasn't so wrapped up in these gender norms and, and power inequity do you think people would transition? And I just want you all to know that my answer is unequivocally yes to that for me it doesn't mean if I lived on a desert island I would want my T. I did what I did to live with my body not for you all to see right. It's, it's really helpful to me that you can see me the way I see myself it makes my life a lot better but the fundamental reason I had to do the medical stuff was for myself.

So, again, it doesn't, people think a lot of this tracks back to gender norms. And I don't think so. I think this is a very individuated thing. And if trans people have always existed and if trans women exist and we have to know that this is this is urgent. And it's interior because transgender women lose so much in terms of the way they get treated by society where I have a trans female friend

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who's really mean and ugly ex-wife said to her something like, 'why would you ever want to be a second-class citizen?' Like because she was gonna transition to female. And my friend actually said, 'wow, do you think I could get to second-class?' Like trans women are not second-class. Women are second-class in our culture. Trans women are something, I don't even know what number goes with it is way below that right. So, who would ever do that if it wasn't something that you just had to do right. For us that's how urgent and immediate it feels. Okay I want to go back real quick and talk about those other people real fast on that slide and then if there's even more questions I wanted to take it

Earlier slide:

['Transgender People Throughout History']

Adrien:

So Wewa was a Zuni person she traveled to Washington DC as a woman in the early 1900s

Billie Tipton was a professional jazz musician. He was a band leader, he was professionally active from the 1930s to the 1960s. He was married to three different women, allegedly, in his lifetime. Nobody ever knew that he was designated female at birth and that was discovered when he died when they examined his body on his death, they found out he was what we would now call a transgender man. There's a really great biography of Billy called Suits Me. If you want to read, a biography of Billy Tipton is called Suits Me.

Lucy Hicks was a transgender woman in California in the 1940s, also married to a man but living her life as a woman.

And Lily Elby was the subject of that movie the Danish Girl, did you all ever hear about that one? So she was one of the early recipients of genital surgery in Europe in the early like 1900s.

Anything else? Any other burning thoughts or questions? So, first of all, who knows what the most common gender-neutral pronoun is right now? Yes, 'they' the singular they. Did y'all know there was a singular they? Well, guess what. It goes back to the 13th century so, if you don't think that's grammatically correct, Google it, okay. Google singular 'they' and you will get a mile-long Wikipedia article about the singular 'they' which has been in linguistic allowance since the 13th century. Very famous authors like Jane Austen and Byron used the singular 'they' in their writing so this is not grammatically incorrect, if that's your opposition to it.

But for me, more importantly, it's already colloquial. We do it all the time and we don't even hear ourselves do it, right. Today you probably said something like, 'oh my boss came by my office and they said I gotta get that thing in by Friday.' Not one person here's going, 'oh my god how many bosses!? What are you talking about?' You all know someone a person's called they, right? So if someone says my pronouns are they, them, theirs, just do it. Because what you'll find is it's not at all hard to do. Your mouth is already ready for it. It's good practice and it's definitely how we show respect, right, I think is just to try it. I think more times than you think when you think about 'they had' or 'they said,' it wouldn't even differ. Just plural or singular. So, lots of times it's just going to flow and where it doesn't, always equal to just put the person's name and instead to clarify that you're talking about Ellen. You know, instead of saying they you could just say, 'Ellen wants,' you know, or whatever. We can just we can work it out.

I think it's important that we try because that's how we show that we care. And I want to say this, I used to teach people that it was okay to ask for someone's pronouns back in the early days of doing these trainings. I would say if you're not sure just ask somebody. It's okay, right. And now, more and more, what I teach is offer yours. Offer your pronouns. When you ask somebody their pronouns you are essentially saying I find you gender variant. I don't know what to call you so I have to ask you to find out what to call you. If we normalize the fact that nobody knows anybody's pronouns, that is better. When I look out at y'all I don't know who uses what

Transgender 101 Training Transcript

As Presented by Adrien Lawyer, Co-founder of the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico

here. Any person in this room could use 'they' and how would I know that? I don't know you, so if I assume based on what you look like I'm going to be wrong. I've had it happen to me. I have a colleague, we're in a meeting and we finally went around and said names and pronouns and one of our intros, it was a recurring meeting, and they said, 'oh I go by they.' And I was like oh no, like for months I had been using the wrong pronouns and I'm the director of the transgender blah blah blah. I couldn't believe. I was mortified. I was like, 'I cannot believe I've been using your wrong pronouns for months in these meetings.' It was horrifying.

So I've had a lot of groups that I trained that just resolved to say names and pronouns as part of group norms group intros. Even if you don't think that there's a trans or gender variant person in the group you may really be surprised, right. But anytime you have a meeting you start with saying our name and pronouns. Go around the room, 'I'm Adrien, I use he pronouns,' right. You just go around the room that way because it says I don't know and when we acknowledge that we have no way to know it's so much better than assuming.

I have many many cisgender colleagues now who are putting their pronouns and their email signature blocks. Lots and lots of people who are just putting them in the email signature because it just continues to perpetuate the truth that we really don't know and unless we name it out loud we don't know. And we make assumptions. We're gonna make mistakes and we're gonna hurt people really inadvertently, right. But this is not about intent, it's about impact. So, saying pronouns is an important way to have the impact of saying you're safe to say your pronouns with me, I'm gonna say mine to make safety for you.

I hate if I've hurt somebody's feelings. It's like the worse thing. With my mom that was actually the thing that would you would get go to hell for, hurting somebody's feelings, you know. So, it's like I want to lose it if I hurt somebody's feelings. But the truth is that I'm asking them to comfort me, but I misgendered you, right. So, I actually think the best thing is a short simple ... but really since you're like, 'wow, I'm really sorry, I meant they now I'm gonna say they, let's move on, what were we talking about,' right. Like you don't need to fall out but also don't pretend like you didn't do it. Say sorry, but not like *sorry*, you know it, don't be like *my bad*. Just be like, 'hey, I'm really sorry.' And then go forward because you can mean the best and be thinking kind thoughts toward me, but if you call me she or ma'am um it's not going to be cool. If you say it nice, right, I do not want to be called she. I waited my whole life to be the man that I was supposed to be and I do not want to be misgendered, right. So, it can be hard. It can be, you know, completely awkward. It can be something where we stumble a lot. But I think when people give you the language they want to have used for them, you got to try. You got to try because that's where the respect is really shown, is that you're making a sincere effort to call somebody what they have asked you to call them. I think that it matters. I think it matters a lot to me where there's somebody's [unintelligible].

I'm going to see my family at Christmas and somebody there will definitely call me she while I'm there and I don't lose it on them because they don't mean it. They don't mean it that way. They're not being hostile, they don't not accept me. They just slip, right. So, you're right, that's not a thing where I go bananas and be like, 'I'm disowning all y'all! I'm never coming back here!' You know, I'm like, 'hey well no, you know, but let's move on.' But there's other people if somebody, when I was doing a training, came up and talked to me that way I would that would get a really bad reaction out of me because it's open hostility, right. So, the, the way you do it matters but also, simultaneously, you got to put the effort into doing it right, you know. You have to even though it can be hard, right. It's new, a lot of this feels new to us and that's always hard, I think that's always hard.

Alright, you all are amazing, you all are awesome!

[Applause]