



Gendered Accommodations: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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Identifying as a trans/gender variant¹ advocate, I have been cautious and careful when speaking on behalf of the trans community while actively serving as an ally in the gender conforming community. There are times where trans/gender variant concerns need to be addressed and I voice these concerns. However, I do not represent all trans people or speak for the entire community. As an ally, it is important to recognize and use my realms of influence to make change, but this can't take the place of trans voices. As I sit at the table planning events, conferences, programs, and initiatives, I voice the need for safe spaces for all attendees that include access to a bathroom space that can be violence, fear, and confusion free. This, in my experience, is a growing need and remains difficult to meet without a lot of planning, understanding, and education. Once educated, exposed, or having the experiences (or even one experience) an event planner may understand that something needs to happen but is unsure of appropriate accommodations, let alone how to go about incorporating a "cure" for what seems (and is) a much larger problem – deconstructing the social construction of gender.

The Biggest Hurdle: Sexism in Sexually Charged Environments

I have found that the first hurdle to move through when asking to provide gender neutral

¹ I use the words trans, trans/gender variant, transwoman, and transman, to be inclusive of many identities encompassing gender expressions other than birth assigned gender binaries. Due to identity politics and the fluidity





spaces is the sexism that contaminates both men and women at the decision making table. It is assumed and practiced that women need a space that can lock for safety reasons. The likelihood of a woman being attacked, assaulted, and/or raped evidently significantly increases (or at least gets the attention of risk managers and legal counsel) when a publicly accessible door doesn't lock and the woman may be alone. This includes both bathrooms and locker rooms. The idea is that a man could follow a woman through an unlocked entrance and then lock the door from the public being able to save, rescue, or intervene in the defense of the woman being preyed upon. It is not considered that an attacker could have entered an unlocked space prior to a person's entrance and waited for their prey. However, when marking a space as specifically gender neutral, I have been told that this creates a target for a vulnerable population and conjures the lurking predator image. There are a lot of problems with this line of questioning, but it is important to note that our society's sexism prevails over logic and rational practice. Traditional assumptions include that the attacker, of course, is male; the victim, of course, is female; every person every time they enter a space always locks the door behind them to feel safer; violent attacks only occur in private secluded spaces; the attacker is a stranger. I have also been challenged that by changing signs to gender neutral signs a target is created for a weak vulnerable population. Using the same sexist rationale, wouldn't posting a sign that says "Women's only" do the same? Perhaps this is why women's spaces are policed so heavily.

of gender, I feel it impossible to accurately use and reflect all identities equally in this paper and therefore use trans

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The lockable space is also questioned at times because unwanted activities could happen within the bounds of the locked space and no one would know. Windows are used in study rooms and other private non-gendered spaces often to create “safe spaces” where attacks or other events that would need to be witnessed may occur. Unlike other private spaces, like study rooms and cubicles in libraries, gendered spaces can’t have windows as a security option. Bathrooms and locker rooms are gendered spaces in that at some point while using the space, there will be exposure to genitalia or “private parts” as my grandmother says. These parts must remain private, due to federal, state, and local regulations for nudity and age.

Locker Rooms and Dressing Rooms

There then needs to be an enclosed, private, and lockable space when using the bathroom and changing clothes after athletic practice or at the gym. Most locker rooms that I have been in are labeled similarly to bathrooms. There is some fluidity in the privacy barriers and locks. Most locker rooms that I have experienced have private lockable stalls for each toilet, and a private lockable ADA accessible shower, but the other showers are separated by a plastic curtain, if anything. This curtain may provide some privacy but certainly doesn’t lock.

I haven’t seen dressing rooms included in this listing of vulnerable spaces. Dressing rooms are in public stores where a person “tries on” clothes prior to purchase. Some dressing rooms, like at the Gap, have private rooms with lockable usually partial doors. While these doors are often not

or trans/gender variant as inclusive and umbrella terms representing a full collection of gender expressing people.

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full sized, (for security and inventory purposes against theft) they do offer some privacy. I have experienced others, like at Daffy’s Department store in New York City, that are one big room surrounded by mirrors and low benches where people of the same gender (as determined by the attendant) openly undress and try on clothes together.² The latter dressing room, which I refer to as a “free show dressing room,” doesn’t even have a lockable door between its entrance hall where an attendant hands you a number and you leave unwanted items and the rest of the store! As a side note, the public bathrooms in this same department store are binary gendered, with locking stalls. Moreover, dressing rooms are usually labeled as just that or maybe “fitting rooms” without a gendered label. Some stores do have gendered spaces by having boy/girl or men’s/women’s fitting rooms. Others may only use a fitting room label but enforce a gender specification that correlates with the gendered clothing items closest to the space. Trying on clothes at the Gap provides a very individualized, private, and secure experience, while the same experience at Daffy’s would be comparable by state law back in Texas as a full nudity strip show followed by some sort of critique similar to an episode of *The View*.

Lastly, when getting an annual exam, mammogram, preparing for surgery, or receiving other medical services, you are asked to change clothes. Sometimes, there is a changing room that is

² These open dressing rooms continue to be shocking for me both as a queer woman and as a trans advocate. I can’t imagine a trans person ever feeling comfortable trying on clothing in this manner. Conversations would occur among the women in the room with their accompanying friends but also with each other. A woman may tell another that an article of clothing was particularly flattering or if it appeared that an item was being discarded as a “non-purchase” another woman may ask to try it on. After a woman would leave the “dressing room” several women would join in chorus and critique the recently departed woman’s body, choice of clothing, underwear, hygiene, etc.





separate, private, and locks. Other times, there is a single use bathroom that also serves as a changing room. Then again, when I got my mammogram recently, I flashed back to my college residence hall community shower separated by a cloth curtain from other people changing clothes.³

To review, socially dependent sexism views women as weak and more vulnerable than men who are seen as uncontrollable predators. Thus, locks are needed to keep intruders from coming in and potential victims safe inside. Locks also provide a sense of security and privacy. Windows and partial doors are deemed necessary to prevent crime and aid witnesses to wrong doing when complete privacy is deemed unnecessary. Bathrooms and locker rooms are areas that need to be secured from “outsiders” but once inside, there are varying degrees of private spaces provided. Dressing rooms and changing rooms also have varying degrees of security and privacy. So not only is the sexism targeting the individuals, but there is a sense of sexism that seems to be applied to different situations and spaces providing different services. Is the use of the space or the call for the need of such a space considered sexual in nature? This seems to be the question. I think there is something connected to gendering spaces that maintain the very sexism it is “protecting.”

Different Forms of Bathroom Accommodations

Unisex : One Size Fits All

The idea here is a space or service that applies to all. Picture the “Unisex barber shop” next

³ At least in a residence hall, you live with the other floor mates using the shower and can create a schedule based on the routine of the floor that supports an individuals’ sense of privacy.





to the local grocery store or “Unisex” clothing items. There are limitations, but “everyone” can use the service or item. The reality is much more complex. A person seeking a sophisticated or complicated hair cut is less likely to be drawn in by a Unisex barber shop, as they have special needs, expectations, and/or assumptions of what kind of hair cut a place like this may offer. Individuals, who have cow-licks, bald spots, birthmarks, scars, etc., may need specific and individualized attention. Unisex clothing items tend to lack tailoring or size/shape specific detailing. This may be deemed more or less important by the potential wearer. Socks may be deemed, Unisex, (picturing white tube socks) and can serve many purposes, but there are specialized socks that fit different needs (dress socks, tights, etc.). Again, to keep with the socks metaphor, those fun socks with the individual toe pockets, isn’t there an assumption that everyone has ten toes all a uniform shape and length? For bathrooms Unisex seems inappropriate on a number of levels. There isn’t a universal sex requirement to use a bathroom. The only universal commonality is the need to use the space for the myriad of reasons mentioned earlier. If “sex” is referring to hormones, biology, genitalia, chromosomes, body shape, and/or body function, then these need to be regularly checked and monitored. When was the last time you had your chromosomal make up analyzed? The monitoring currently is enforced by other users of the space “reading” each other and giving a stranger a pass or fail. Pass, you get to stay, fail and you inflame anger, violence, hatred, fear, and danger. “Unisex” isn’t a clear label for a multi-stalled bathroom and in my opinion, isn’t a “one size fits all” term that should be used in any context.





Unisex is usually clearly spelled out on the signage followed by Restroom or Bathroom. There are rarely “unisex” images associated with the word unisex. This also limits access to those that can read and/or recognize the word “Unisex.” The words Restroom and Bathroom may be more recognizable to those that don’t read and/or don’t read English.

Single Stalled/Occupancy/Use

Commonly referred to as handicapped and/or family bathrooms, the single use bathroom seems to exist under stairwells and in tight architectural nooks and to accommodate someone with special needs. The idea here is to have a single toilet and sink area that usually meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for wheelchairs and may even have diaper changing accoutrement like a changing table and large trash cans. The exterior door locks and there may or may not be built-in stall walls around the toilet that also lock. One person, or one connected group, uses the space at a time. This is a practical option, as these spaces can be safe, secure, private, and uniform in use, and in my opinion ,one that is also the most accurately labeled.

Signage usually has the triangle woman sign clearly separated from the man sign by a thin but longer vertical bar. This implies “both” are welcome, but one at a time. Some signs include a symbol of a baby or using the man symbol standing next to a shorter version of the man symbol to represent an adult with a child (an older or taller child and child? a father and child? a father and son? what about a mother and a daughter?). A similarly sized scale, and at times, I have seen a small sized wheelchair on the signs to represent ADA accessible facilities. This is the “catch all” or





“othered” space, but at least there is a space.

The idea here is similar to that which I grew up with sharing a bathroom with my brother in our home. If the door was closed, it was being used. If the door wasn't closed it was free for someone else to enter. I may have left the door open while I was washing my face and my brother could enter and brush his teeth. We created a system where both privacy and efficiency could be used in a single space depending on the individual user's wishes.

Gender Neutral

The bathroom spaces may be single stalled/occupancy/use bathroom spaces or multi-stalled/occupancy spaces like the ones at the conferences mentioned above. The idea here is to provide a space where gender perception is accepting of all expressions. Meaning, in this space, users, regardless of what they look or “read” like get to use the space as they wish. Gender roles, cultures, and customs in bathroom spaces are checked at the door - actions and attitudes are “strictly business.” This is an ideal for all bathroom users, as the purpose of a bathroom can be about activities and personal needs instead of gender confirmation. The idea of being able to share a private space with another person with common needs of relief, privacy, performance, and interpersonal exchange, rests on the dismantling of sexism. “Men” no longer are perceived as violent aggressors and “Women” no longer being viewed as weak targets. Moreover, what makes and confirms one's gender identity is no longer rooted in the social construction of masculinity and femininity but of self identification, individuality, freedom, and a sense of social acceptance and





security.

Signage on Gender Neutral Bathrooms typically consists of the words “Gender Neutral” and/or the symbols of both the triangle woman and stick figure man. The figures are not separated by a vertical line, at times appear to be holding hands, or split in half to have one figure that is half triangle (or dress) and half stick (or pants). I encourage the broad implementation of a recognizable symbol that isn’t gendered by clothing or aged by height, or even limited by equipment. By equipment, I mean to represent wheelchairs, but also janitor/housekeeping symbols labeled with the stick figure (man) holding a mop next to a bucket for the storage area and break room at my office. An example of a gender neutral symbol is “WC.” Traditionally British, a WC labels a Water Closet or a space which includes at least one toilet and a sink. So, how about using signage reading “bathroom” or “restroom” or even “toilet and sink.”

Gender Free Bathroom

As I continue doing bathroom work, the Gender Free Bathroom has come up as an option so I feel it is important to include it here. Due to the success for the television show *Ally McBeal*, the idea of men and women using the same bathroom at the same time on the show has led to this concept being referred to as the “Ally McBeal Bathroom.” I think it may be better stated that the “Ally McBeal” concept is closer to a Gender Neutral Bathroom as I do not think it possible to create a completely genderless or gender free space regardless of activity or use of said space. The television show as well as the common practice of conference attendees using the gender neutral





spaces in supportive gaggles still interacted (or, in the case of the disappointed, didn't interact) with the "other." This "other" and self identity supports a gender binary therefore supporting a gendered space instead of a truly gender free zone. For some, this remains the ideal. I insist that removing or deleting an innate element of the human experience, the expression and identity of one's gender as well as the perception of another's gender and how that correlates with the self seems to limit a significant part of the human experience. I conclude that all humans will at some point use gender to express themselves to others and perceive the gender of others to delineate how to interact. It is through gender expression and perceptions that gender roles are defined, negated, and supported. These gender roles are socially constructed and evolve over time. For example, George Washington expressed his male privilege and power by wearing stockings, hair bows, face powder, and ruffled shirts. George W. Bush wears dark socks, tightly groomed short hair, and a suit and tie. Both are men, US Presidents, and leaders of the free world, but at different times with very different socially constructed norms of gender expression. For both George's, there were and are social expectations of expression that symbolize both prestige and gender. These cues are perceived and interpreted to adjust the interactions like language, signs of respect, and space (along with others) of another. A truly gender free space seems highly unlikely and awfully boring.

My Experience

I use the bathroom. I see others using the bathroom as well. These spaces are used for a wide variety of activities like: checking hair, gossiping, reacquainting and introducing oneself to

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another, as well as discreetly (usually) having sex, doing and selling drugs, being emotional in private, just being alone, as well as reliving one's self.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) annual conference, Creating Change, is the first instance that I experienced gender neutral bathrooms. Sue Hyde, NGLTF conference coordinator, works diligently a year in advance working to prepare convention center and hotel staff for one of the largest Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender⁴ (LGBT), and Ally gatherings in the country. Typically, at least one set of hotel or conference site bathrooms is "re-labeled" as Gender Neutral Bathrooms. There is also a disclaimer in the conference guide about these bathroom spaces and the importance of not making assumptions about another's identity. Men and Women's bathrooms are present throughout the hotels and convention center, but there is consistently at least one "set" that is clearly marked as Gender Neutral. The location of this space (and others if

⁴ I use the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender when referring to sexual orientation/gender identity/gender expression. This language is employed with the understanding that many individuals identified as LGBT may choose to use other self-identifying terms or none at all. Recent research (Rankin, 2003) suggests that not all respondents wanted to place themselves in LGBT boxes. Many would prefer choices such as "same-gender loving," "gender-queer," "pansexual," "queer," "woman-loving-woman," etc. Some consider the "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," and "transgender" categories to be predominately white social constructs of identity, and therefore not relevant to their personal experiences. The author of this essay chooses to identify as "queer," not as a label, a camp, or a statement but as a means of confronting and disrupting the static notions of gender and sexuality. The term "queer" allows her to not conform to any discrete categorization of sexuality. However, "queer" was overwhelmingly not the self-identity choice of black LGBT people who participated in another recent research project; in fact, most chose gay or lesbian. In addition, as mentioned, there are many other labels that individuals choose. I recognize the personal and political import of language and the need to recognize a broad range of self-identity choices.



applicable) is specifically highlighted in the program guide and there are signs directing folks to the exact location.

Another organization of which I am a member, American College Personnel Association, appointed me in 2004 as the first Gender Advocate with the Standing Committee of LGBT Awareness. As I created the position, educated the Standing Committee and full organization membership of trans related concerns, I leaned on my experiences at Creating Change and decided to tackle the gender neutral bathroom amenity for the annual convention. I served as Gender Advocate for two years for conventions in Philadelphia and Nashville. To further raise awareness, I collected letters of support for trans/gender variant inclusion from NGLTF and the other leading College Personnel organization National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)'s LGBT Knowledge Community. Sue Hyde continues to serve as a mentor for folks around the country planning large scale conferences in how to work with hotel and convention center staffs, and is a powerful resource for those negotiating the need and ease with which accommodations can be made. I also am frequently contacted now in the planning stages of events as well as during and after when complaints are filed. (This is where I have “earned” the nickname, Dr. Bathrooms.)

Gender Neutral Bathrooms are not just a university or conference issue. In Houston, a transwomen refugee from New Orleans post-Katrina was arrested for using a gendered “make-shift” shower at the Convention center as she didn’t feel safe bathing in a male community shower.

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Recognizing the difficulties of showering in a women’s bathroom differently bodied, the refugee waited for a time where the bathroom wasn’t occupied by other bathers. It was a staff member that filed the complaint leading to the arrest. It is imperative to note, that in times of crisis, professional settings, in Penn Station, campuses, and public venues, bathrooms are deemed as sacred gendered spaces. Specifically, bathrooms confirm membership to a specific side of a gender binary. A user must be able to have their needs met while using the facilities without disrupting someone else’s identity and perception of gender. So, how do you accommodate trans or gender variant folks while educating the larger population of the social construction of gender?

In Philadelphia, at the ACPA annual convention, I negotiated two gender neutral bathrooms - one close to the convention site, and one in the main hotel close to the largest meeting space. Each “set” was altered by having a Men’s room as originally labeled, and the “women’s room” sign covered with a sheet of paper (at times a paper towel); outside of the bathroom set was an easel with a sign that read “Gender Neutral Bathroom” with the conference logo. The second set was the same except the Women’s room was left in its original state and the Men’s was altered to serve as a Gender Neutral space. I left hefty packets of education materials under both easels for people with questions, concerns, or those seeking resources for their home campuses. These packets listed my cell number and hotel room number for anyone that had questions, concerns, or just wanted to talk.

The Philadelphia site managers were concerned about having a “full set” of bathrooms “taken off-line” as there were other events occurring at the same time and therefore only agreed to





mark half of a set as gender neutral. The bathrooms were also only marked after the convention “officially” opened and the signs were removed the morning of the closing ceremony/speaker. The Nashville ACPA convention site marked two full sets (both men and women, one close to the largest meeting space and one close to the convention center) by allowing convention staff to have an easel out front of the bathroom set. Due to building rules, no signs were permitted on the walls, or taped to the doors so only an easel with a large foam board sign and the conference logo labeled these spaces. Upon arriving at convention, three days before opening, the bathroom sets were clearly labeled and open for service, but the signs read “Gendered Bathroom.”⁵ I worked feverishly to get new signs that read “Gender Neutral Bathroom,” left stacks of contact information and educational materials. Both conventions offered a roundtable discussion to answer questions about Gender Neutral Bathrooms as well as a Trans/gender variant social was held to raise awareness of trans identified conference attendees’ needs, as well as those needs back home on college campuses across the country.

The Fall Out

The Philadelphia convention resulted in three negative experiences directly connected to the bathrooms, while in Nashville no problems were reported. In Philly, a gender ambiguous person

⁵ “Gendered Bathroom” could be the label for every bathroom and connotes “Colored” to my ears as does “Transgendered.” Gender, to me, like variations of skin color, has socially constructed meanings. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender non-conformity and/or expression are not notions that happen upon individuals but are interpreted or perceived by others to have a meaning.





who identifies as a woman was using the mirror to straighten her tie before going in for a job interview in the gender neutral bathroom. While at the mirror, a person she identified as an older male college administrator came in mid-conversation with a colleague stating, “what the hell are they going to ask for next? I need to piss.” He came in, saw her, gave her a dismissive if not questioning look, and went to the stall (there were no urinals as this bathroom usually serves as a Women’s bathroom). She left the bathroom to wait for her interview. After a few minutes this same man, called her name, not recognizing her, and lead her away to her first professional job interview. The minutes leading up to a job interview can create a high level of anxiety for a candidate, but adding the invisibility of not being recognized as the person treated negatively just five minutes prior by a person in a power or dominant position can be devastating. Moreover, the candidate had more insight to her interviewer’s demeanor, personality, if not at least mood that could directly impact the impressions of the job, institution, and/or campus climate. Additionally, she can draw conclusions (accurately or inaccurately) about her potential interactions on a professional level with what could be a future supervisor or colleague.

The second incident occurred during a late night social event. A transman was approached while using a urinal by what seemed to be an intoxicated man. The man became very angry that there was a “women” using a “fake dick” in the gender neutral bathroom. Lastly, following the convention, the organizers received a letter from a woman that attended another event using the convention center at the same time as the ACPA convention. She walked into the gender neutral





bathroom and as she exited a stall was very upset to see a man in the bathroom space. She stated that she didn't see any signs that man would be allowed into a women's bathroom and that the man should have just gone next door to the men's room.

In all three cases, I was contacted directly to write responses to the Conference Organizers and to the woman not associated with ACPA. I believe strongly, that proactive planning allows for preparation for negative experiences associated with gender neutral bathrooms, as they are a "new thing" for most folks. In this scenario, gathering letters of support from other similar and highly respected organizations helped to persuade hotel and connection staff (as well as staff within ACPA) that gender neutral bathrooms are necessary. In addition, if the "worse case scenarios" were to happen, other organizations would support ACPA's efforts to be trans inclusive.

In my experience, it is common for convention attendees who want to support trans initiatives but are new to Gender Neutral Bathrooms, to use the Gender Neutral Bathrooms in small groups of similarly gendered folks (a small gaggle of men or women) and they often return disappointed when they exit if someone of the "opposite gender" didn't come in at the same time. For some, it is exciting to enter a Gender Neutral Bathroom because it seems like they are doing something that goes against society, and to a large degree they are. Gender Neutral Bathrooms are far from a socially accepted norm. Yet, while their experience may seem fresh, it is unlikely of a gender conforming man or woman entering a bathroom, even if labeled Gender Neutral, if a group of "oppositely gendered" people can be heard and the even more improbable entrance of a gender





non-forming person hearing a group of people regardless of gender inside any bathroom.

I believe fewer negative situations are likely to happen if a full set is “taken off line” as there is room for less confusion about signage. It is customary to have a Men’s space next to a Women’s space. Removing one option, or in some cases I have experienced, covering one placard with a paper towel, doesn’t remove the social expectation and education of which gender “belongs” in which space. Lastly, I would like to remind readers, that a Gender Neutral Bathroom is a necessary accommodation and not a progressive novelty. If a user needs a group of friends to experience the bathroom, take a moment to reflect on the fear, anxiety, and danger of the lived experiences of those who don’t have a support group to accompany them to the bathroom every time.

What Can You Do?⁶

When looking to address bathroom use concerns at your place of business, spaces you use regularly, and/or when planning a gender inclusive event there are a few things that you can do to provide appropriate accommodations to those that need and want them. For bathrooms, one can start by educating appropriate decision makers regarding the need for gender-neutral facilities. It may take some education and training to understand even the words you are using let alone the need for accommodations. Trans/gender variant folks are often seen as targets for acts of violence due

⁶ The following suggested steps are pulled from a document previously published as Beemyn, B., Dominique, D., Pettitt, J., and Smith, T. (2005). Trans Action Steps: Trans Inclusive Steps for a College Campus. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education*, 3, (2). I wrote the specific sections referred to here and have since changed my preferred wording, ideas, and opinions of some of the





to gender non-conformity and transphobia. One must keep in mind that creating a space where sexism (don't forget racism, classism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) is erased and all people are accepting of all other people regardless of gender expression, identity, or perception, only addresses half of the problem. We need to remain aware that people may not be comfortable with their current body shapes, there are extremely different personal senses of privacy and comfort levels in being undressed, naked, or something in between with others present or possibly present. Therefore, providing private and secure accommodations needs to also include gender inclusivity, an awareness of expression variants and the accompanying perceptions.

Also, in part of your planning it is important to also have a response plan for complaints. I have found that largely, complaints come from our own community and rarely from outside of the targeted event. So, have a plan. What are you going to do when folks on the inside are the complainers? It is good to also have a response or education action plan for those on the outside. Coming to terms with the fact that the insiders, what I refer to as “my people”, are the folks that actually complain, call police, or inflict violence in a specifically labeled space to build inclusion is important. Ouch!

How Do I Do This?

I prefer to be the most prepared “boy scout” possible and prior to introducing the topic of the need for gender neutral bathrooms and/or locker rooms, I recommend surveying existing

steps. This compilation of Action Steps has **been** deemed *very* popular among college and university

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accommodations and those of similar or benchmark institutions or organizations. Have results ready to present when introducing the concept, in a clear and concise manner to field (and squelch) questions. Depending on your specific limitations and opportunities as well as your known (and unknown?) needs, the following list of Action Steps may be a helpful guide towards inclusive accommodations.

BATHROOMS^{7, 8}

Beginning

- Conduct an audit of Gender Neutral, Unisex, and Single Stalled/Occupancy women's and men's bathrooms that currently exist and exactly how each it labeled. It is possible that the labeling will be inconsistent which can be used as leverage during discussions as a need for consistency and inclusivity.
- Publicize the locations of gender-free bathrooms through a website/brochure. Using a website allows for broader accessibility of the list and is confidential and anonymous for information seekers. Also, a website listing could also include a submission link for other's that have accommodations to add to the list.
- Establish and/or maintain relationships with the ADA compliance and/or service providers as well as any initiative for families. These two populations also benefit from having single occupant bathroom spaces. Bathroom users with disabilities may have attendants that may or may not be similarly gendered needing a single use bathroom space. People with small children may need to accompany the child to the bathroom for assistance and may

officials trying to proactively (or reactively in some cases) make inclusive change on their campuses.

⁷ Beemyn, et. al.

⁸ Additional Bathroom resources are:

People in Search of Safe Restrooms (PSSR): <http://www.pissr.org>

Sylvia Rivera Law Project: <http://www.srlp.org/documents.html#bath>

University of California Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex Association web page

on gender-free restrooms: <http://www.uclgbtia.org/restrooms.html>

University of Chicago's Gender-Neutral Bathrooms Campaign:

<http://queeraction.uchicago.edu/bathroomindex.html>

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also be differently gendered and benefit from a single use bathroom space.

- In the absence of gender-neutral bathrooms, establish temporary single use facilities in buildings where events are being held by hanging gender-neutral signs and information outside a set of women’s and men’s restrooms. It is important to note that not all trans/gender variant folks identify as LGB. The trans community may feel more welcomed at an LGBT event, thus temporary accommodations at LGBT events are important. The heterosexual trans person may not attend LGBT events and would need accommodations as well as other events.

Intermediate

- Have single-occupancy men’s and women’s rooms converted into Gender Neutral Bathrooms by installing locks (if necessary) and changing signs.
- Create consistent signage for all bathroom facilities that appropriately label the space.

Advanced

- Have new and renovated spaces include visible and accessible Gender Neutral Bathrooms with consistent signage

LOCKER ROOMS⁹

Beginning

- Conduct an audit of on site single-person showers and provide the info through a website/brochure. Using a website allows for broader accessibility of list and is confidential and anonymous for information seekers. Also, a website listing could also include a submission link for other’s that have accommodations to add to the list.

Intermediate

- Provide more privacy in public locker rooms, such as by creating individual showers with curtains, lockable doors, or other means of securing a users sense of privacy and safety that are consistently labeled.

Advanced

- Have new and renovated locker rooms include private changing facilities

⁹ Beemyn, et. al.





and single-person showers that are consistently labeled.

Recognizing there is a need, is a big step towards gender inclusion for trans/gender variant people. However, recognizing that often current services are limiting access, under serving, doing harm, and discriminating against the very communities they are serving is another. Even more important is coming to terms with the fact that we as individuals perpetuate sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, etc., and need for gendered spaces for our own sense of comfort. One's gender identity is fluid, ever changing, and highly individualized. It is as possible to accurately "read" another's gender identity as much as it is to label another's race, sexual identity, relationship status, economic class, religion, age, ability, political affiliation, and personal affection for pickles. Sometimes, maybe even often, by layering different characteristics, symbols, stereotypes, images, and information provided, we get it right. Think about all the times you were wrong. Now think about the times you think you were right, but actually were wrong. You may have the privilege of knowing when you are wrong in your assumptions, but there certainly are times where assumptions aren't confronted or corrected. Coming to terms with being a part of the problem is a big step towards becoming part of the solution.

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Additional readings

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Beemyn, B. G., Pettitt, J., Marciano, O. (2006). **Transgender Resource Guide.** Pre-Conference Workshop; Everything a Student Affairs Administrator needs to know about Transgender students. NASPA, March 12th & ACPA, March 19th.

Pettitt, J. and Krutzsch, B. (2004). **Translating Boyer's principles and community: Impact on Trans/gender variant campus populations.** *Talking Stick: Symbol of International Friendship*, 22 (3), 12-14. Association of College and University Housing Officers- International.

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