



# Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

## **LGBTQIA2S+ Awareness and Event Guidelines** **USA Mission Fields** **Updated September 2023**

In response to Community of Christ Enduring Principles Worth of All Persons, Blessings of Community, and Unity in Diversity, the USA Mission Fields desire to promote awareness and be inclusive of all persons in the Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer-Intersex-Asexual-Two Spirit (LGBTQIA2S+) community. This Best Practice document addresses topics connected with the participation of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in camps and events. This document has been updated since its first release in 2020 and will continue to evolve as our understanding of individual identification and expression grows.

As leaders and organizers prepare for an event, please be mindful of the guidance found in this document. Laws impacting LGBTQIA2S+ persons and their experiences are changing rapidly around the world, and it is important to frequently review their status prior to making assumptions. However, a more appropriate level of leadership response to these issues is to provide safe, welcoming, and accommodating environments for LGBTQIA2S+ individuals' participation. When facility or logistical realities limit the ability to fully provide a healthy environment, leaders will explore ways to address and overcome these limitations.

A majority of events take place at Community of Christ campgrounds or congregations, most of which were not designed with the accommodations recommended here. We also acknowledge the different challenges that youth activities present, especially when housing youth. We ask that you make a genuine effort to transform the spaces you use to be most accommodating to all participants.

### **Brief Definitions:**

- Sexual Orientation refers to a person's enduring physical, romantic, or emotional attraction to a person of a particular gender.
- Gender Identity refers to how a person sees themselves in terms of their gender, that is a person's internal, personal sense of being a man, woman (or boy or girl), or somewhere outside that gender binary.

➡ Review [The Genderbread Person<sup>1</sup>](https://www.harmony.lgbt/uploads/1/1/7/3/117324582/genderbread_person_v4_poster.pdf) for a helpful guide in making the distinctions above.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.harmony.lgbt/uploads/1/1/7/3/117324582/genderbread\\_person\\_v4\\_poster.pdf](https://www.harmony.lgbt/uploads/1/1/7/3/117324582/genderbread_person_v4_poster.pdf)

### **Registration Forms and Pre-Event Information:**

- Allow for confidentiality in participant's sexual identification. NEVER "out" someone. ("Outing" refers to telling others that someone is LGBTQIA2S+ without the person's expressed consent). Ask the person who else may be informed about their gender or sexual identification.
- Avoid binary gender identity designations, such as "M or F" on registration forms. When possible, use "Gender Identity" with space for further clarification. When a non-binary participant registers, have a conversation with them (and parents or guardians if applicable) to clarify and address concerns and questions regarding event participation.
- Share with all participants (and parents or guardians) the expectation of LGBTQIA2S+ individuals being full participants in the event and have opportunity to discuss concerns and questions with staff prior to and during the event. If staff become aware that someone who is LGBTQIA2S+ has registered, take time to discuss the inclusive steps being taken and determine if further accommodations may be helpful to ensure safe participation in the experience. Staff may need to provide separate bathrooms and showers or sleeping quarters for the participants if requested.
- Ask participants their name and pronouns. When using name tags provide space for all participants to include pronouns. The registration form, however, should also include a space for the legal name listed on their health insurance policy.
- When non-binary or transgender identity of a participant was not disclosed prior to the event, it is important the director have a conversation with the individual (and parents or guardians when appropriate) regarding bathrooms, sleeping quarters, and other participation issues. This conversation should follow confidentiality and privacy protocols. Priority to safety and comfort should always be considered.
- All staff should be generally educated about gender identity issues and be sensitive to the individual circumstances of participants. A critical goal is to provide a safe physical, social, and emotional climate at the event.
- As with all medications, event medical staff must be informed of any hormonal supplements needed by participants.
- Provide time in the event to build understanding among all participants about the need for acceptance and inclusion of all individuals. Under no circumstances will harassment, bullying, or violence be tolerated at an event.

### **Bathrooms:**

- A gender-neutral restroom should be available for participants to use.
- When the facility does not have a gender-neutral restroom, participants must have access to toilet stalls with privacy doors. Individuals should use the binary-gender restroom they feel most closely aligns with their gender identification. Appropriate staff members should be informed of this action.
- If multiple gender-specific restrooms are available, a good option is to clearly identify one of them as a single-user, gender-neutral restroom with a privacy lock. These facilities may also be used as restrooms for families.

- A gender-neutral shower and private changing area should be available for participants.
- When a gender-neutral shower area is not available at the event facility, staff members should designate specific shower availability times for all participants that will accommodate individual needs that include access to private changing areas.

### **Sleeping Quarters and Changing Areas:**

- When a participant identifies as transgender, non-binary, or questioning, a conversation with appropriate staff should take place to assure the safety, privacy, and comfort of all participants in determining the best sleeping arrangements, particularly in youth camp settings.
- Unless there are extenuating circumstances, participants should sleep in the binary-gender quarters they feel most closely aligns with their gender identification.
- Staff should assure every participant has access to private changing areas, even when the event facility was not designed for this accommodation.
- Assign an experienced and sensitive cabin counselor to supervise the sleeping quarters assigned to these participants. Staff should adhere to the Community of Christ Privacy Code of Conduct as outlined in the Registered Children & Youth Worker registration process.

### **Rental Facilities and New Construction:**

- Preference for rental event facilities should include access to gender-neutral restrooms, showers, sleeping quarters, and changing areas.
- Congregations or mission centers contemplating new construction of Community of Christ facilities should consider or include LGBTQIA2S+ needs as part of their design process to help foster greater inclusivity.

### **Programming:**

- Pay attention to unconscious binary language and make changes to be more inclusive. For example, use an alternate way to divide a large group that is not based on gender (boys & girls). When singing, rather than asking men and women to sing separate verses, invite them to divide by “high voices” and “low voices”.

### **Information Resources:**

- **American Camping Association**, [www.acacamps.org/resource-library](http://www.acacamps.org/resource-library)
- **American Psychological Association**, <https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/orientation>
- **Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)**, Transgender FAQ, [www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq](http://www.glaad.org/transgender/transfaq) and Tips for Allies of Transgender People, [www.glaad.org/transgender/allies](http://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies)
- **Harmony** provides advocacy, education and resources for Queer voices in Community of Christ with a shared vision of full participation. [www.harmony.lgbt](http://www.harmony.lgbt)
- **PFLAG**, [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

### **Additional Definitions:**

- **Ally** - a (typically straight and/or cisgender) person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQIA2S+ community. We consider people to be active allies who take meaningful actions to show this support and respect.
- **Agender** - a person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender.
- **Bisexual** - a person who is attracted to some people of their gender and different gender persons.
- **Cisgender** - a person who has a gender identity consistent with the sex they were assigned at birth. It may be considered as the opposite to the term transgender.
- **Dead name** - a name no longer used by a person who took on a different name to match their gender identity.
- **Equity** – the process of identifying and removing the barriers that create disparities in the access to resources and means, and the achievement of fair treatment and equal opportunities to thrive.
- **Gay or homosexual** - a person who is attracted to a same gender person. Gay women may prefer the term lesbian.
- **Gender Expression** - the external display of one’s gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity.
- **Gender Fluid** - a gender identity best described as a dynamic mix of boy and girl. A person who is gender fluid may always feel like a mix of the two traditional genders, but may feel more man some days, and more woman other days.
- **Inclusion** – creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to participate fully.
- **Intersex** – a term for a combination of chromosomes, hormones, internal sex organs, and genitals that differs from the two expected patterns of male or female.
- **Misgender** – referring or relating to a person using language whether a word or a pronoun that is not in line with another’s gender identity, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This behavior or action often occurs when people make assumptions about a person's gender identity.
- **Non-binary** – a gender identity label used by some people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman. Often abbreviated as “enby” (based on the pronunciation of N-B) Non-binary people may sometimes be referred to as “X” versus “M” (male) or “F” (female).
- **Outing** - the involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.
- **(Personal) Gender Pronouns** – The set of pronouns that an individual personally uses and would like others to use when referring to them. Although the list of personal pronouns is continuously evolving, the intention of using a person’s pronouns correctly is to reduce the adverse societal effects those with personal pronouns that don’t match their perceived gender identity face.
- **Queer** - an umbrella term to describe individuals who don’t identify as straight and/or cisgender. Historically used as a derogatory term, it is being reclaimed by some who

identify as LGBTQIA2S+. Harmony uses the phrase “Queer voices” to describe all persons, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity who have the courage to use their voice to speak for justice for the marginalized in the Queer community.<sup>2</sup>

- **Straight or heterosexual** - a person who is attracted to a different binary gender person.
- **Transgender** – an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their sex assigned at birth. Transgender or “trans” does not imply any form of sexual orientation.
- **Transition/Transitioning** - the process of a transgender person seeking to bring their body into alignment with their gender identity. It may include changing aspects of themselves (e.g., their appearance, name, pronouns, or making physical changes to their body) to be more congruent with the gender they know themselves to be (as opposed to the gender they lived as pre-transitioning).<sup>3</sup>
- **2S - Two Spirit** - a third gender found in some indigenous cultures, for a person who embodies both male and female spirits within them, hence Two Spirit. Some birth-assigned men or women take on the identities and roles of both feminine and masculine genders. A sacred and historical identity, Two Spirit can include but is by no means limited to LGBTQ identities.
- **+ Plus** - used to indicate that the acronym specifically means to include everyone in the gender and sexually expansive community.

Important note: Historically, there have been other terms used to describe individuals who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, many of them used pejoratively. Showing respect for the individual includes respecting the terminology that individual uses to describe their gender identity or sexual orientation. Be aware that the terminology used by one LGBTQIA2S+ person may differ from what another LGBTQIA2S+ person would use or find appropriate.

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<sup>2</sup> Several definitions taken from Defining LGBTQ+ A Guide to Gender & Sexuality Terminology by Sam Killermann; all rights released

<sup>3</sup> <https://glaad.org/transgender/transfaq/>

## Event Assessment Checklist

- Do our advertising and resources use inclusive language and images in support of LGBTQIA2S+?
- Do our registration forms allow for gender identification and pronouns in a respectful and confidential way?
- Is confidentiality upheld to respect the privacy of each individual?
- Use of correct pronouns is practiced with identification available on name tags.
- Bathrooms are designed as gender neutral and event participants understand they are welcome to use the gendered bathroom of their choice.
- Is our culture a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA2S+ staff and participants?
- Has the event director or staff consulted with LGBTQIA2S+ members or Harmony to explore ways to provide an inclusive experience?
- Does training for staff include a component for addressing the needs for LGBTQIA2S+ participants?
- Even if there are no participants who openly identify as LGBTQIA2S+, the event operates from the assumption that we have LGBTQIA2S+ participants present.

**If you can check all nine boxes – you are ready to welcome participants!**