

GENDER:

The Gender-Friendly Primer on

YOUR

What to Know, What to Say, and

GUIDE

2ND EDITION

What to Do in the New Gender Culture

Colleges and Universities

Starting Place Discussion Guide for Instructors and Student Service Professionals

Gender: Your Guide (GYG) is a book that welcomes everyone, regardless of their familiarity or personal relationship with gender diversity, into the project of making spaces where gender is less rigid: a source of more joy and less harm. This discussion guide offers a starting place for people who work together on college or university campuses.

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

Suggested advanced reading for everyone:

- Preface and Introduction
- Chapter 1: Understanding Gender in Today's World
- Chapter 3: Learning about the Transgender Spectrum

Begin your discussion by... inviting people to make a connection between Lee's story of coming to know themselves as nonbinary (pages 72-78), and the experiences of a transgender post-secondary student who they support or know about on campus (taking care to remove identifying information as appropriate).

Suggested group readings (together, aloud) and activities:

- Read pages 147-151 including the sidebar, then:
 - This section brings up two examples to illustrate how gendered our language can be, and some workarounds: Service Canada counters, and doctors' offices. Together, identify parallels with student service interactions. Identify 'Less-Gender Friendly' and 'More Gender-Friendly' ways of **greeting students** and **talking about students** where you are. What changes can you make?
- Read pages 174-178, then:
 - This section discusses how to make **bathrooms** more gender-friendly, including directing people to bathrooms and signage. Have everyone take a moment to identify, from memory or using an institutional resource, the nearest all-gender or gender-neutral washroom to their office (or classroom, if applicable). Debrief together: did they know this already? Was the information easy to find? Could a student or visitor find it? What changes are needed?
- Read pages 179-180, then:
 - This section talks about issues in how institutions collect and use **people's personal information**. Invite everyone to share forms or other data collection that happens on your campus. Are these gender-friendly? Do these processes work if, for example, names change?

Next steps: Putting your heads together, can you identify any institutional policies that cover the areas you have just discussed? If not, find and bring them back to your next meeting. If so, how do they stack up against what you have read and discussed in the book? This is a starting place for actions of many kinds.