

## **Affirmative Pedagogy: Affirmative Approaches as a Pedagogical Framework to Improve LGBTQ+ College Retention**

Aim of Presentation	This roundtable aims to explore issues surrounding post-secondary education for LGBTQI+ students and how teaching practices, (pedagogy), and curriculum development can impact college retention. Affirmative Therapy, a professional counseling approach designed to be specifically tailored for LGBTQI+ issues, is discussed as a possible complimentary approach to current teaching practices through practices such as (a) normalizing all sexual identities and expressions, (b) combating heterosexism and homophobia, and (c) empowering sexual minorities through strength validation, skills building, and supportive relationships. This approach will empower teachers to be better able to promote identity development, safe spaces, and resource connection by collaborating with students to explore hierarchical assumptions inherent in traditional curriculum models to personalize them to student needs.
Supplemental Materials	Included for your convenience are three handouts. First, an example of a syllabus critically evaluating how affirmative therapy can be infused into student learning objectives, curriculum, and possible current BGSU policies. The syllabus also functions as a way to provide information about the presentation and the references used to construct the roundtable. Second, a handout of the major tenets of Affirmative Therapy to provide common language and education on how the approach is currently being used in clinical counseling practice. Finally, the Genderbread Person handout is provided to provide education on the dimensions surrounding gender and sexuality.
Safe Space Disclaimer & Confidentiality	As it is fitting with our topic, this roundtable discussion is meant to be a safe place to discuss and process. As your facilitators, we can guarantee our confidentiality, with certain restrictions, pertaining to what is shared. However, as this is a group discussion, we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of all roundtable attendees. We ask that, by participating in this roundtable, you as the attendee agree to maintain confidentiality as to what is discussed.

Please direct any questions regarding confidentiality, risks related to roundtable discussion, or for more information on Affirmative Therapy to one of the facilitators.

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## PRACTICING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY HONORS EDUCATION CONFERENCE

### Honors College of BGSU

### Affirmative Pedagogy: Affirmative Approaches as a Pedagogical Framework to Improve LGBTQ+ College Retention

### Affirmative Syllabus Example

### 2017 Fall Semester

#### Section A: Instructor Information

**Name of Presenters** Michael Desposito  
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**Graduate Program** Mental Health Counseling

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Stephanie Durham – [sdurham@bgsu.edu](mailto:sdurham@bgsu.edu)

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#### Section B: Presentation Details

**Meeting** October 25th 1pm to 2pm in Bowen-Thompson Student Union - Room 308

**Presentation Description** This course is an introduction to affirmative pedagogy to improve retention of LGBTQ+ individuals on college campuses. Students will develop cultural competence in the following areas: (a) how to promote identity development, (b) how to promote safe spaces, and (c) how to build resource connections in the community. Students will be able to apply affirmative approaches both in and outside the classroom.

**Methods of Instruction** Taught in roundtable format group discussion. Further enhancement of instruction will come from supplemental handouts on the material being discussed.

## Examples of Affirmative Pedagogy

### Section C: Student Learning Objectives

During this course, students will learn to identify research problems and evaluate them through appropriate research design.

#### Traditional Course Objectives:

After completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate class specific material.
2. Formulate a research topic suitable for research and dissemination.
3. Reflect on class material and research in a dynamic and provocative way.

#### Affirmative Course Objectives to be Added:

After completing the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify resources and strengths specific to personal identities to both succeed in classroom and beyond.
2. Challenge both external and internal assumptions that lead to oppression and heterosexism.
3. Create a space for inclusion and success of all identified individuals and groups.

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### Section D: Current BGSU Course Policies Selected for Discussion

#### Statement of Diversity

In concert with Bowling Green State University's *Core Values*, and the *Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy* Section VI.f Principles of Ethical Conduct: Diversity and Respect for the Individual, the faculty within the College of Education and Human Development upholds the tenets pledged by the University to respect and value personal uniqueness and differences. This includes, but is not limited to, participating in the initiatives of the University to attract and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students; to challenge stereotypes; and to promote sensitivity toward diversity and foster of an environment of inclusion in all curricular and extra-curricular activities. Therefore, it is expected that all students enrolled in this course will:

- Be considerate of the thoughts and ideas of others;
- Demonstrate accountability, integrity and honor in all course-related activities;
- Promote a collaborative and supportive educational environment; and
- **Treat every individual with kindness, dignity, and respect.**

#### Safe and Confidential Environment

Confidentiality is a core ethical principal of education and the helping professions. Trust and openness are a crucial part of the experiential nature of the class activities essential to integrate the concepts in this course. With regards to yourself, you have the right and responsibility to share only as deeply as you feel comfortable. **This classroom (in-class, site visits, and on Canvas) must be a safe environment for discussions, with no fear of reprisal, criticism, or breach of confidentiality.** Revealing anything about a fellow student, case studies, or any other personal or private information with anyone outside of the class is a breach of confidentiality. Anything you share in this class that is subsequently shared with the instructor will in no way affect your grade and will be kept confidential unless it falls under one of the exceptions of confidentiality, which include, but are not limited to: disclosures of serious and foreseeable harm to self or others, or abuse of a child, elderly person, or

disabled person. Please keep in mind that the class instructor's control over confidentiality limited. **If a classmate discloses any of the above, please see the instructor immediately.** If at any time you experience discomfort or if this class brings up any difficult issues for you please speak with the instructor for a referral, or contact the BGSU Counseling Center which provides counseling services free to students. **Breach of confidentiality is very serious and will result in consequences such as affecting your grade or even up-to failure of the course.**

## Informed Consent

**This syllabus serves as the contract between the instructor and the students for the semester and course noted.** As the semester progresses, if simple answers regarding this course can be answered in the syllabus, students will be referred to it for the answer(s). If, after consulting the syllabus further clarification is still required, the student should contact the instructor for clarification. Furthermore, questions regarding grades often require more than a simple reply via email. Consequently, questions regarding grades should be addressed live during the instructor's office hours. If a legitimate reason (instructor's discretion) precludes a student making the instructor's office hours, an appointment may be scheduled to address grading questions.

**ADA Compliance:** BGSU provides educational opportunities to people with disabilities and complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended 29 U.S.C. 794), and other applicable federal and state laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. The complete Policy on Students with Disabilities, including grievance procedures, is available in the Office of Accessibility Services (they are located in Room 38 College Park Office Building, their phone number is 419.530.4981 (TTY 419.372.9455), and their website is <http://www.bgsu.edu/disability-services.html>), and the Division of Student Affairs (they are located in Room 107 Conklin North, their phone number is 419.372.2147, and their website is <http://www.bgsu.edu/student-affairs/about-us.html>)

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## Section E: References for Presentation

- Frank, D. A., & Cannon, E. P. (2010). Queer Theory as Pedagogy in Counselor Education: A Framework for Diversity Training. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 4(1), 18-31. doi:10.1080/15538600903552731
- Gorski, P. C., Davis, S. N., & Reiter, A. (2013). An examination of the (in)visibility of sexual orientation, heterosexism, homophobia, and other LGBTQ concerns in U.S. multicultural teacher education coursework. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 10(3), 224-248. doi:10.1080/19361653.2013.798986
- Herek, G. M., Cogan, J. C., & Gillis, J. R. (2002). Victim experiences in hate crimes based on sexual orientation. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(2), 319-339. doi:10.1111/1540- 4560.00263
- Holland, L., Matthews, T. L., & Schott, M. R. (2013). "That's so gay!" exploring college students' attitudes toward the LGBT population. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 60(4), 575-595. doi:10.1080/00918369.2013.760321
- Jacobson-Lundeberg, V. (2016). Pedagogical Implementation of 21st Century Skills. *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development*, 2782-100.
- Kaplan, A., & Flum, H. (2012). Identity formation in educational settings: A critical focus for education in the 21st century. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 37(3), 171-175. doi:10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.01.005
- Kaplan, D. M., Tarvydas, V. M., & Gladding, S. T. (2014). 20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling: The New Consensus Definition of Counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(3), 366-372.

Killermann, S. (2015). *The Genderbread Person v3.3 | It's Pronounced Metrosexual*. [online] It's Pronounced Metrosexual. Available at: <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/03/the-genderbread-person-v2-0/>.

Mellow, G. O., Van Slyck, P., & Eynon, B. (2003). Diversity in Education: Need for Innovation. *Current*, (453), 3-9.

O'Shaughnessy, T., & Spokane, A. R. (2013). Lesbian and gay affirmative therapy competency, self-efficacy, and personality in psychology trainees. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 41(6), 825-856.

Pachankis, J. E., & Goldfried, M. R. (2004). Clinical Issues in Working with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 41(3), 227-246. doi:10.1037/0033-3204.41.3.227

Polk, D. M. (2014). Forces for Positive Change: Preparing Leaders for the 21st Century in an Undergraduate Honors Program. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 13(2), 140-151. doi:10.12806/V13/I2/A1

Ratts, M. J., Singh, A. A., Nassar-McMillan, S., Butler, S. K. and McCullough, J. R. (2016), Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies: Guidelines for the Counseling Profession. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 44: 28–48. doi:10.1002/jmcd.12035

Rock, M., Carlson, T. S., & McGeorge, C. R. (2010). Does affirmative training matter? Assessing CFT students' beliefs about sexual orientation and their level of affirmative training. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 36(2), 171-184.

Schmidt, C. K., Miles, J. R., & Welsh, A. C. (2011). Perceived discrimination and social support: The influences on career development and college adjustment of LGBT college students. *Journal of Career Development*, 38(4), 293-309. doi:10.1177/0894845310372615

Sue, D.W., & Sue, D. (2016). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Walker, J. A., & Prince, T. (2010). Training considerations and suggested counseling interventions for LGBT individuals. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 4(1), 2-17. doi:10.1080/15538600903552756

# LGBT Affirmative Therapy

*Tips for creating a more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, & queer inclusive practice  
from the AAMFT Queer Affirmative Caucus*

## *Affirmative therapy is:*

an approach to therapy that embraces a positive view of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) identities and relationships and addresses the negative influences that homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism have on the lives of LGBTQ clients

Adapted from Rock, M., Carlson, T. S., & McGeorge, C. R. (2010). Does affirmative training matter? Assessing CFT students' beliefs about sexual orientation and their level of affirmative training. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 36(2), 171-184.

*"...I want LGBTQ clients to know that I support them and their families. Being affirmative means I treat loving couples, families, and transgender people with the dignity, respect, and affirmation they deserve; they are fine just the way they are."*

## *Being an affirmative therapist involves:*

1. Self-reflection – reflect on your own upbringing, attitudes and beliefs; acknowledge areas of privilege; recognize bias stemming from living in a heteronormative and gender-binaristic society.
2. Get involved – live an affirmative life; become familiar with the issues; strive for social justice and social change.
3. Create an affirmative setting – provide LGBT friendly reading material, literature and resources; include affirming language on all paperwork; use client's preferred name; don't resort to heteronormative assumptions, instead ask about a client's *partner*
4. Be open about your commitment to providing affirmative therapy with all clients, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
5. With heterosexual and/or cisgender clients, act as an advocate by challenging heterosexism and the gender binary.

## *Definitions*

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*Ally* – a member of a majority group to works to end oppression

*Asexual* – an individual who has no significant interest in sexual activity

*Bisexual* – an individual who is attracted to men and women

*Cisgender* – a person who's gender identity is in line with the gender assigned at birth

*Drag* – involves the performance of gender expression; not based on sexual orientation

*Gay* – a man who is attracted to men

*Gender expression*- outward expression of gender (clothing, mannerisms, activities, etc...)

*Gender Identity* – a person's deeply held sense of their own gender, regardless of what they were assigned at birth.

*Gender non-conforming* – people whose experiences, behaviors, interests, or identities fall outside stereotypical gender expectations

*Gender roles* – culturally defined behaviors, attitudes, emotions, traits, mannerisms, appearances and occupations

*Genderqueer* – a person who feels their gender identity is outside the binary

## Tips for Affirmative Therapists

1. Talk about your LGBTQ affirmative stance to colleagues, potential clients, family, and friends.
2. Be aware of your own heteronormative and gender normative assumptions. Challenge oppression.
3. Know the LGBTQ resources in your local community.
4. Acknowledge that each person has a unique story related to personal discovery and disclosure of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
5. Know the differences between sexual orientation and gender identity
6. Using correct terminology. When in doubt about how to talk about identity, ask!
7. Ensure that intake forms include a blank option for gender and acknowledge LGBTQ relationships.
8. Access LGBTQ affirmative continuing education trainings and resources for clinical practice.
9. Include gay and lesbian literature in your waiting area.
10. Get involved in LGBTQ community events and activities.

## Recommended Resources:

- Bigner, J. J., & Wetchler, J. L. (2012). *Handbook of LGBT- affirmative couple and family therapy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bieschke, K. J., Perez, R. M., & DeBord K. A. (Eds.), *Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Clients*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Chernin, J. N. & Johnson, M. R. (2002). *Affirmative psychotherapy and counseling for lesbians and gay men*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Fish, L. S., & Harvey, R. G. (2005). *Nurturing Queer Youth*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Deneborough, D. (2001). *Narrative Queer Counselling and Narrative Practice*. Dulwich Centre Publications.
- Lev, A. I. (2004). *Transgender emergence: Therapeutic guidelines for working with gender-variant people and their families*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Ritter, K. Y. & Terndrup, A. I. (2002). *Handbook of affirmative psychotherapy with lesbian and gay men*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- World Professional Association for Transgender Health. (2011). *Standards of care for the health of transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming people*. (7<sup>th</sup> ed.).

## Definitions cont.

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*Heterosexism* – the presumption that all people are straight

*Heterosexual/straight* – a man who is attracted to women; a woman who is attracted to men

*Homophobia* – irrational fear or hatred of LGBTQ people

*Intersex* – a person whose biological sex is ambiguous; not synonymous with *transgender*

*Lesbian* – a woman who is attracted to women

*LGBTQIA* – an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex Ally or Asexual

*Queer* – a re-appropriated term for people whose identities challenge dominant norms related to sexuality and gender

*Sexual orientation* – describes an individual's attraction to another person

*Transgender* – people whose gender identity is different from their assigned gender at birth

*Transman or Female-to-male (FTM)* - a person who is biologically female, or assigned female at birth and identifies as male.

*Transphobia* – irrational fear or hatred of transpeople

*Transsexual* – a person who undergoes procedures to change their body to fit their gender identity

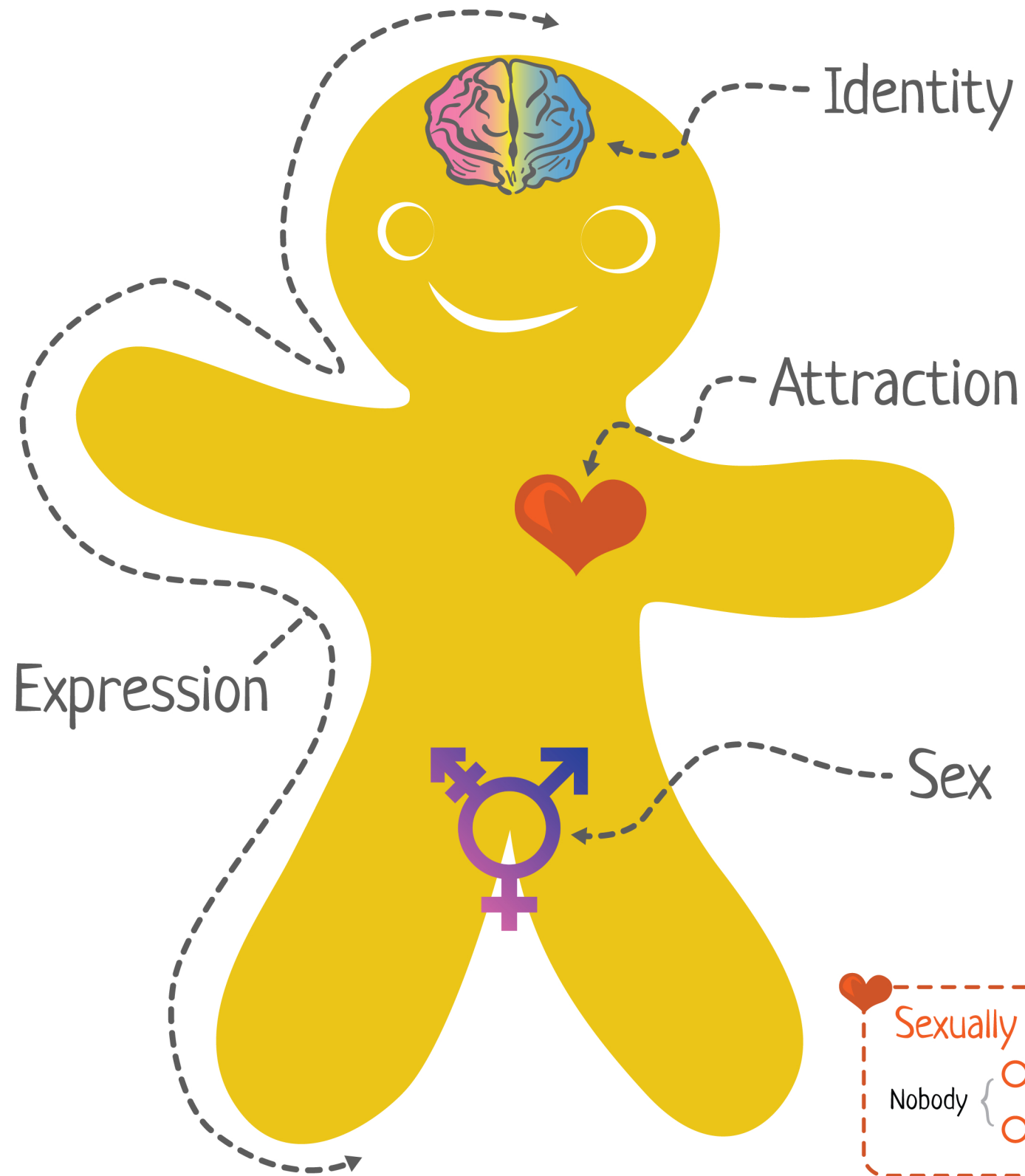
*Transwoman or Male-to-female (MTF)* - a person who is born biologically male, or assigned male at birth and identifies as female



# The Genderbread Person v3.3

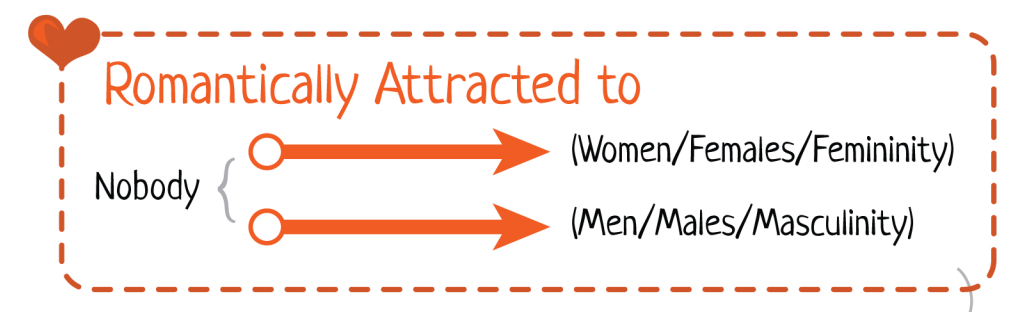
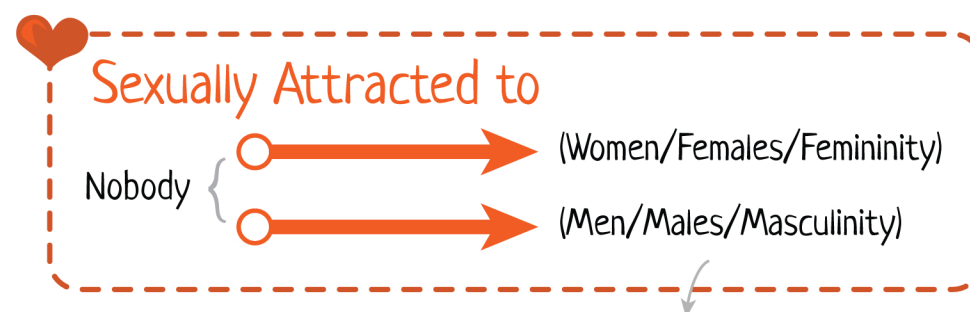
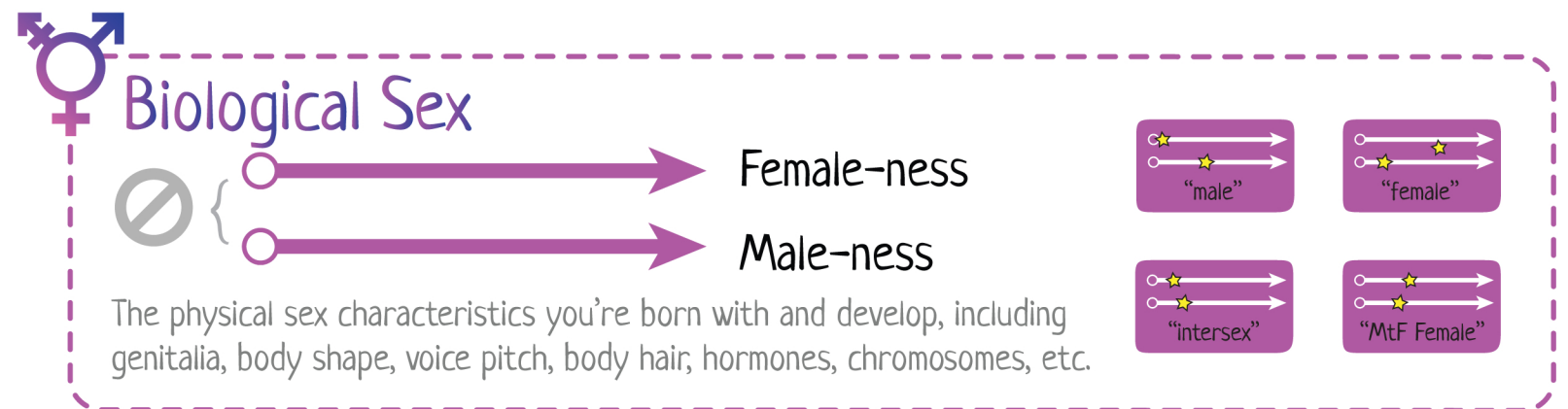
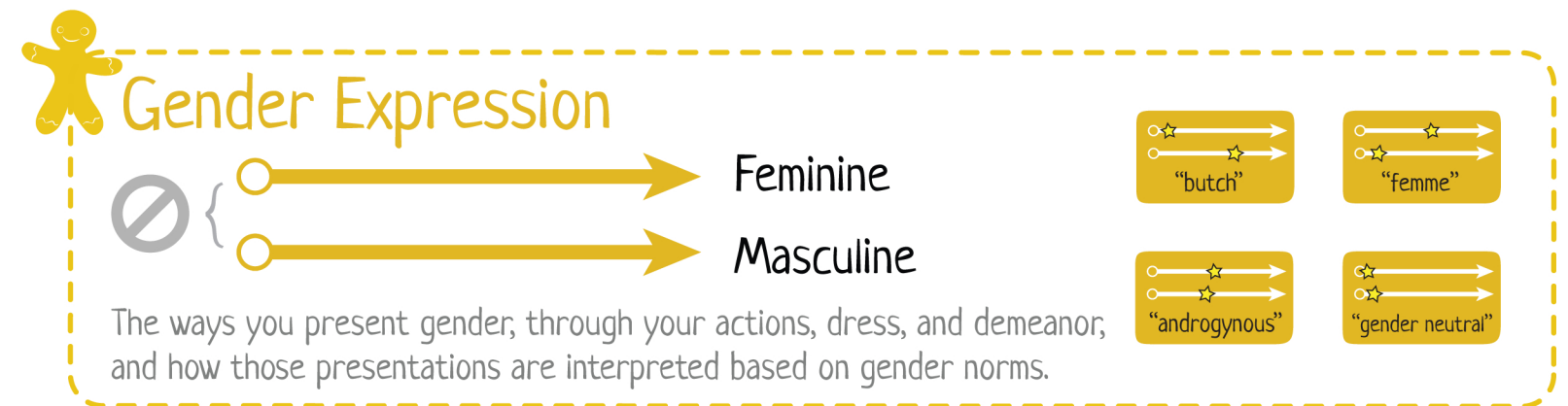
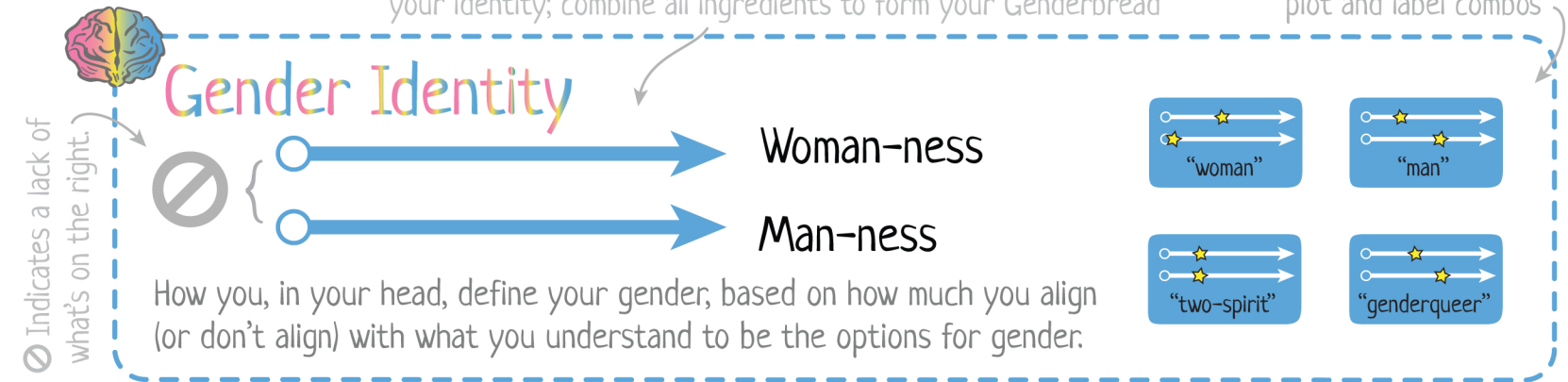
by it's pronounced **METRO**sexual.com

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Like *Inception*. Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It's okay if you're hungry for more. In fact, that's the idea.



Plot a point on both continua in each category to represent your identity; combine all ingredients to form your Genderbread

4 (of infinite) possible plot and label combos



In each grouping, circle all that apply to you and plot a point, depicting the aspects of gender toward which you experience attraction.