SOGI Leadership Scenario

Worksheet

*Some of these scenarios are more likely during the secondary or elementary years, but most could be either. Try to imagine that this is a student at your school. Discuss and record in your group what you would do, both immediately, and to be proactive so that future issues are avoided. You may use your own district/division’s SOGI Policy/Procedure and/or the Ministry of Education Guidelines of your province/territory.*

Scenario 1: Scott

A student and their mom come to you for help. Although assigned female at birth, from a very early age, this student has identified as a boy. They now want to live and attend school as a boy, and to be called Scott.

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| Immediate Actions | Proactive Plan |
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Scenario 2: Taz

A student, Taz, has told several friends that she is a lesbian, but is not "out" at home. You know that her family is deeply religious, very conservative, and you suspect wouldn’t be supportive. She has started skipping school after graffiti like "dyke" and "lesbo" began to appear on her desk or locker.

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Scenario 3: Kady

A student, Kady, began identifying as gender non-binary last year, and has asked everyone to use the pronouns, “they”, “them” and “theirs”. They come to you because they are quite upset saying that one of the other teachers is intentionally using female pronouns and saying that, “it’s simply too hard to remember.”

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Scenario 4: Jian

There is a new student in your school named Jian. While records indicate that Jian is male, they are fairly quiet, and their clothing, hair and mannerisms are not definitively male or female. Many students are asking each other whether Jian is a boy or a girl, and are starting to make jokes.

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Scenario 5: Enrique & Fadia

A student, Fadia, comes to you with concerns for her friend, Enrique, who she says is being taunted and teased when there are no teachers present. He is often being called names like "faggot," "gay- boy," and "girlie". He does not usually try to defend himself. Instead, he appears to be trying to make himself invisible, and keeps his eyes down.

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Scenario 6: Kai

A new student, Kai, is coming to your school next September and your administrator has let you know that Kai will be in your class and is gender fluid. Some days, Kai will dress in clothing more typical of boys and other days, more typical of girls.

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Scenario 7: Chloe

You have a new student at your school, Chloe, who is getting tall and somewhat stocky. She is transgender and socially transitioned in grade 3. Her gender expression is quite feminine. Several female students come to you saying that they don’t feel comfortable in the washroom with Chloe, because they say she’s actually a boy.

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Scenario 8: Tyrone

A new student at your school, Tyrone, is afraid to let other teachers and his peers know that he has two dads. The school is hosting a community pot-luck next month, and all parents and guardians are invited, but Tyrone wants you to remove his dads from the email so they won’t find out.

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SOGI Leadership Scenario

Worksheet

*Some of these scenarios are more likely during the secondary or elementary years, but most could be either. Try to imagine that this is a student at your school. Discuss and record in your group what you would do, both immediately, and to be proactive so that future issues are avoided. You may use your own district/division’s SOGI Policy/Procedure and/or the Ministry of Education Guidelines of your province/territory.*

Scenario 9: Saleema

A student, Saleem, has recently been arriving at school and changing into more and more feminine clothing, and then changing back at the end of the day. Saleem announces to you and the class that they want to be called Saleema and use the pronoun “she”.

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**Debriefing Scenario 1 - Scott**

*A student and their mom come to you for help. Although assigned female at birth, from a very early age, this student has identified as a boy. They now want to live and attend school as a boy, and to be called Scott.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* Scott’s mom is supportive. If this was not the case, you may want to explore other family and community supports. Are other family members supportive? Do they know?
* It seems that Scott wants to share his gender identity publicly. This is not always the case with people who are transitioning. It is important to respect a student’s wishes around privacy and confidentiality, as safety may be a real concern. Does Scott want other/all staff to know? How does he want this information shared?
* How and when would Scott like to tell his peers? Would he like an adult to facilitate this conversation? Does he want to be present for the discussion?
* It seems like Scott is interested in going through a social transition – the process by which he will come to be identified as a boy by the school staff and his classmates. Transitions can also involve a range of medical treatments, although not all youth/adults choose to go that route. The student’s desire to transition medically is private medical information and does not need to be discussed or shared unless it has a direct impact on the student’s school experience.
* Has the staff received professional development regarding gender identity?
* How close and supportive are Scott’s peers likely to be?
* Being proactive about age-appropriate lessons on gender identity and being trans for peers
* Lessons/discussion with students about being an “Upstander” when they see someone being teased or harassed
* Where does Scott feel most comfortable using the washroom/change room? Are there factors that might be constraining his choices? (e.g., if he does not feel comfortable using the boy’s washroom due to bullying, this bullying should be addressed)
* Are there activities/sports in the school that are segregated by gender? How will Scott be included?
* What procedures exist to change Scott’s name and gender markers on school records/documents?
* Ensure that teacher(s) include relevant information in sub notes
* Does Scott have siblings and do they need any support?
* If they are not yet connected to community supports, offer information to Scott’s mother/family about local 2SLGBTQ+ organizations and websites such as genderspectrum.org and gendercreativekids.ca

**Debriefing Scenario 2 - Taz**

*A student, Taz, has told several friends that she is a lesbian, but is not “out” at home (she has not yet told her family). You know that her family is deeply religious and very conservative, and you suspect they would not be supportive. She has started skipping school after graffiti like "dyke" and "lesbo" began to appear on her desk or locker.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* + The graffiti should be removed as soon as possible.
	+ If those responsible are known, regular disciplinary procedures should apply.
	+ Is there a trusted adult who would be best to check in with Taz?
	+ What school supports (if any) would she find helpful? Counsellor? GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) Club?
	+ Are there other family or community supports that could be explored? Siblings?
	+ Does she want other staff members to know and/or to be watching for further harassment?
	+ How close and supportive are Taz’s friends? Can they help support?
	+ The graffiti is symptomatic of the need for greater student learning regarding sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Do teachers talk about same-gender families and/or sexual orientation in an inclusive way in their classroom? Are there posters around that set a clear standard that the school community embraces people of all genders and sexualities?
	+ Discuss with students about being an “Upstander” when anyone is being teased or harassed
	+ Is there a GSA in the school? Student leadership is a great way to shift school culture.
	+ It’s important for Taz to know that she is supported and should report any further harassment
	+ Is Taz having difficulty reconciling her faith with her sexuality? Are there books or web- based resources that would be helpful? Even if she is not, it might beneficial to invite a guest speaker who can speak to the way that faith or spirituality can be inclusive of SOGI issues as other students may have similar struggles.
	+ Do not assume that Taz’s parents are unsupportive, but you should be aware of relevant resources if this becomes an issue. PFLAG is an excellent organization that has helped many parents to accept their child’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Would Taz like to be connected to a counsellor who can help her through potential family conflicts?

**Debriefing Scenario 3: Kady**

*A student, Kady, began identifying as gender non-binary last year, and has asked everyone to use the pronouns, “they”, “them” and “theirs”. They come to you because they are quite upset saying that one of the other teachers is intentionally using female pronouns and saying that, “it’s simply too hard to remember.”*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* + What would the student like you to do? Are they comfortable with you bringing it up with this other teacher? Are they just looking for your emotional support?
	+ Be mindful of union rules before addressing the situation.
	+ Do you have a good relationship with this teacher? Can you check in with them directly?
	+ Where is the resistance coming from?
	+ Have there been training opportunities about gender diversity for staff? If yes, has it included a substantial discussion of non-binary genders?
	+ Sharing some helpful resources about long-standing usage of they as a singular pronoun in English
	+ Providing the teacher with some opportunities to practice using the correct pronouns
	+ How are other students reacting to the situation?
	+ How could the teacher’s behaviour impact how other students are treating Kady?
	+ Is support for gender diversity clear in the school? (posters, curriculum, library books, etc.)

**Debriefing Scenario 4: Jian**

*There is a new student in your school named Jian. While records indicate that Jian is male, they are fairly quiet, and their clothing, hair and mannerisms are not definitively male or female. Many students are asking each other whether Jian is a boy or a girl, and are starting to make jokes.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* + Do teachers at the school ask or talk about pronouns in their classes?
	+ Has Jian expressed a pronoun that they would like used?
	+ Is there a trusted adult who would be best to check in with Jian to see if they have heard these remarks?
	+ Is Jian’s counsellor aware of the students’ remarks?
	+ Are other teachers aware of the students’ remarks?
	+ Have staff received training in gender diversity and non-binary people?
	+ Has the student body received education about gender diversity and non-binary people?
	+ Are there any posters, stickers, or other visuals indicating openness to gender diversity in the school?
	+ What is the school culture around diversity generally?
	+ What is the best way to address gender based teasing and name-calling with all students, or at least with those making jokes?
	+ If Jian does come out as trans or gender non-binary, what school supports (if any) would they find helpful? Counsellor? GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) Club?
	+ Is Jian comfortable in the washroom? Is there another washroom that would be more comfortable?
	+ Do they want other staff members to know and/or to be watching for further harassment?
	+ Does Jian have any close friends at the school? Can they help support?
	+ Lessons/discussion with students about being an “Upstander” when anyone is being teased or harassed
	+ It’s important for Jian to know that they are supported and should report any further harassment

**Debriefing Scenario 5: Enrique & Fadia**

*A student, Fadia, comes to you with concerns for her friend, Enrique, who she says is being taunted and teased when there are no teachers present. He is often being called names like "faggot," "gay- boy," and "girlie". He does not usually try to defend himself. Instead, he appears to be trying to make himself invisible, and keeps his eyes down.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* + If those responsible for the name-calling are known, regular disciplinary procedures should apply.
	+ Does Enrique know that Fadia has come to talk to you? Thank her for taking care of her friend.
	+ Is there a trusted adult who would be best to check in with Enrique to see how he’s doing?
	+ It’s important for Enrique to know that he is supported and should report any further harassment.
	+ Is Enrique’s counsellor aware of the name-calling?
	+ Are other teachers and admin aware of the name-calling?
	+ Does Enrique have a trusted adult to talk to?
	+ The name-calling is symptomatic of the need for greater student learning regarding sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Do teachers talk about same-sex families and/or sexual orientation in an inclusive way in their classroom? Are there posters around that set a clear standard that the school community embraces people of all genders and sexualities?
	+ What is the school culture around diversity generally?
	+ Is there a GSA in the school? Student leadership is a great way to shift school culture.
	+ Discuss with students about being an “Upstander” when anyone is being teased or harassed

**Debriefing Scenario 6 - Kai**

*A new student, Kai, is coming to your school next September and your administrator has let you know that Kai will be in your class and is gender fluid. Some days, Kai will dress in clothing more typical of boys and other days, more typical of girls.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* + Do teachers at the school ask or talk about pronouns in their classes?
	+ Has Kai expressed a pronoun that they would like used?
	+ Is Kai’s counsellor aware of the situation? Is the counsellor trained in gender diversity and non-binary people?
	+ Have other staff received training in gender diversity and non-binary people?
	+ Has the student body received education about gender diversity and non-binary people?
	+ Are there any posters, stickers, or other visuals indicating openness to gender diversity in the school?
	+ What is the school culture around diversity generally?
	+ Is there a GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) in the school? Student leadership is a great way to shift school culture.
	+ Are there gender-inclusive washrooms at the school?
	+ Where does Kai feel most comfortable using the washroom/change room? Are there factors that might be constraining his choices? (e.g., if Kai does not feel comfortable a certain washroom due to bullying, this bullying should be addressed)
	+ It’s important for Kai to know that they are supported at the school.

**Debriefing Scenario 7 - Chloe**

*You have a new student at your school, Chloe, who is getting tall and somewhat stocky. She is transgender and socially transitioned in grade 3. Her gender expression is quite feminine. Several female students come to you saying that they don’t feel comfortable in the washroom with Chloe, because they say she’s actually a boy.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* Ask the girls if they have said anything to Chloe about their discomfort. Does she know that they are coming to you? Be sure not to “out” Chloe (reveal that she is transgender) to other students if they do not know this about her. Use this conversations as an opportunity to talk to them broadly about gender diversity and the importance of accepting people of all gender expressions and gender identities.
* Are there students in the school who do know Chloe’s gender identity? Do they support her? Does she have good friends?
* Explore with the girls why they feel uncomfortable without shame or blame. Is Chloe doing anything inappropriate? Distinguish between behaviour that is not OK in a washroom versus a person’s identity. Discomfort because of inappropriate behaviour is a problem, discomfort because of someone’s identity is not that person’s fault.
* Do the girls understand what a transgender person is? If not, it important to explain this to them, and give them some basic vocabulary, so that they can understand that Chloe is a girl.
* Depending on the age of girls, if they know that Chloe is transgender and, you could watch and discuss a short video about washrooms from the SOGI 3 Film and Video List. Mention the historic parallels with discomfort due to race/ethnicity. Ensure they understand that SOGI is a private part of someone’s identity and sharing it is an individual’s decision not theirs.
* Is there a trusted adult who would be best to check in with Chloe? It is likely that this incident is not isolated. If other staff don’t know about her gender identity, does she want this for added support?
* Has the staff received professional development regarding gender identity?
* If Chloe decides to be more open with peers about her gender identity, how would she like to do this? Would she like an adult to facilitate this conversation? Does she want to be present for the discussion?
* Does Chloe have the support of her family?
* What school supports (if any) might she find helpful? Counsellor? GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) Club?
* The girls’ reaction is likely symptomatic of the need for greater understanding about gender identity in the school. Do teachers talk about gender diversity and/or transgender people in an inclusive way in their classroom? Are there posters displayed to set a clear standard that the school community embraces people of all gender identities and expressions?
* Washrooms and change rooms are places where many students feel unsafe. What can the school do to make these spaces safer?
* Lessons/discussion with students about being an “Upstander” when anyone is being harassed.

**Debriefing Scenario 8: Tyrone**

*A new student at your school, Tyrone, is afraid to let other teachers and his peers know that he has two dads. The school is hosting a community pot-luck next month, and all parents and guardians are invited, but Tyrone wants you to remove his dads from the email so they won’t find out.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* + Tyrone’s concerns may be symptomatic of the need for greater student learning regarding sexual orientation. Do teachers talk about same-gender families and/or sexual orientation in an inclusive way in their classroom? Are there posters around that set a clear standard that the school community embraces people and families of all genders and sexualities?
	+ What is the school culture around diversity generally?
	+ Is there a GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) in the school? Student leadership is a great way to shift school culture.
	+ Are there other students with same-gender parents who Tyrone could connect with?
	+ Does Tyrone have any close friends at the school? Can they help support?
	+ It’s important for Tyrone to understand that the school supports him and that all families are welcomed at the school. You may also want to recognize that students often feel embarrassed by their parents for various reasons.
	+ If it hasn’t been done already, is there a lesson or guest speaker that would help Tyrone’s peers to better understand same-sex families?

**Debriefing Scenario 9: Saleema**

*A student, Saleem, has recently been arriving at school and changing into more and more feminine clothing, and then changing back at the end of the day. Saleem tells you that she wants to be called Saleema and use the pronoun “she”.*

Possible questions and ideas to explore:

* Acknowledge Saleema’s courage for coming to tell you this information.
* Let Saleema know that you will support her – and, if you are sure that is the case, that she will be supported at your school by other teachers and staff.
* Is there a counsellor that Saleema has a connection with who might be helpful?
* Find out more about why she is changing clothes before and after school. Do members of her family know about her gender identity? Are they supportive? What about friends?
* It seems that Saleema wants to share her gender identity and use she/hers pronouns with other students. It is important to respect a student’s wishes around privacy and confidentiality, as safety may be a real concern. Does Saleema want other/all staff to know? How does she want this information shared?
* How and when would Saleema like to tell her peers? Would she like an adult to facilitate this conversation? Does she want to be present for the discussion?
* If Saleema’s family does not know, is there someone close to the family who could help Saleema to explain? What supports does she have if they find out and react negatively?
* It seems like Saleema is interested in going through a social transition – the process by which she will come to be identified as a girl by the school staff and her classmates. Transitions can also involve a range of medical treatments, although not all youth/adults choose to go that route. The student’s desire to transition medically is private medical information and does not need to be discussed or shared unless it has a direct impact on the student’s school experience.
* Has the staff received professional development regarding gender identity?
* How close and supportive are Saleema’s peers likely to be? Are there students in the school who do know Saleema’s gender identity? Do they support her? Does she have good friends?
* Do teachers talk about gender diversity and/or transgender people in an inclusive way in their classroom? Are there posters displayed to set a clear standard that the school community embraces people of all gender identities and expressions?
* Age-appropriate lessons on gender identity and being trans for peers
* Lessons/discussion with students about being an “Upstander” when they see someone being teased or harassed
* What school supports (if any) might she find helpful? Counsellor? GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) Club?
* Where does Saleema feel most comfortable using the washroom/change room? Are there factors that might be constraining her choices? (e.g., if she does not feel comfortable using the girls’ washroom due to bullying, this bullying should be addressed)
* Washrooms and change rooms are places where many students feel unsafe. What can the school do to make these spaces safer for everyone?
* Are there activities/sports in the school that are segregated by gender? How will Saleema be included?
* What procedures exist to change Saleema’s name and gender markers on school records/documents?
* Ensure that teacher(s) include relevant information in sub notes
* Does Saleema have siblings and do they need any support?
* If they are not yet connected to community supports, offer information to Saleema’s family about local 2SLGBTQ+ organizations and websites such as genderspectrum.org and gendercreativekids.ca