TOPIC
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EMBRACING GENDER DIVERSITY: EXPLORING GENDER IDENTITY
NAVIGATOR TOPIC GUIDE

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What is gender diversity and gender identity?

Gender diversity is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of gender identities beyond the traditional binary understanding of male and female. The American Psychological Association defines gender diversity as the extent to which a person's gender identity, role, or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for a particular sex.

Gender identity is one's belief and understanding of their gender. Only the individual can truly know and define their gender identity. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

A 15-minute meeting?

The Journey for Teams educational modules are designed for a 15-minute block because veterinary workplaces are busy! We recognize that more than 15 minutes is needed to discuss gender diversity and gender identity in the workplace in depth. After the meeting, we hope the team will be inspired to explore this topic further as a team or individually. Check out Dr. Wolff's resources at the end of this guide.

Let's begin!

Refer to the Navigator Handbook 1.0 and the steps below to help you lead and facilitate discussion about gender diversity and gender identity.

1 To begin the meeting, welcome everyone to the room by name.

2 Remind the group that the culture of a Journey for Teams meeting embodies engagement, open-mindedness, respect, and compassion.

ENGAGED   OPEN-MINDED   RESPECTFUL   COMPASSIONATE

3 ▶ Play the "Embracing Gender Diversity: Exploring Gender Identity" video.

4 Read aloud the 3 take-home messages from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide:

- **Gender identity is a personal and internal sense of one's gender. Gender identity can be female, male, both, neither or anywhere on a spectrum. It can be the same or different from a person's sex assigned at birth.**

- **Gender expression is how people present or express their gender through behavior, clothing, hair, makeup, voice, body language or other aspects of appearance. A person's gender expression does not have to align with their gender identity.**

- **You don't have to understand everything about a person's identity to support them. If someone confides in you that they are transgender, nonconforming, or nonbinary, the most important thing you can ask is, "How can I support you?"**

5 Ask for 1-2 comments on the take-home messages. Keep in mind some discussions may be uncomfortable, and not everyone may want to participate. That's okay.

Try to keep it brief to respect the 15-minute time commitment.

6 Read aloud the 2 questions from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide.

Question for the team:
How can we show that we are welcoming to gender-diverse colleagues and clients?
Spend a maximum of 5 minutes discussing the team question.

Question for individual self-reflection:
No need to share answers or thoughts with anyone.

Consider your own beliefs about gender identity and gender roles. Am I expecting individuals to adhere to societal norms regarding gender? How can I challenge the biases I may have and be a role model for acceptance?

The most important part of the meeting

7 As a team, decide on **1 actionable and measurable behavior change** to implement in your workplace. Consider 1 from the list below, or come up with your own idea.

☐ Review your existing dress code policy to ensure it's inclusive of gender diversity. Implement gender-neutral dress codes so that all employees may select from a range of options.

☐ Add a spot on intake forms to record client pronouns and include employee pronouns on name badges.

☐ Post a diversity sign in your window that says, "Everyone is welcome here" or "Our business welcomes everyone."

Our actionable idea

☐ _____

_____

8 Invite the team to self-reflect. Team members may consider and commit to **1 personal behavior change** (no need to share them with anyone).

☐ Commit to being an ally of the gender-diverse community through self-education. Get information from credible sources such as the Trevor Project, PrideVMC, GLAAD and those listed in the resource section of the Topic Overview.

☐ Use every employee's desired name and pronouns to show mutual respect and courtesy. If you make a mistake with someone's name or pronouns, apologize and let it go. Make an effort to remember them next time.

9 **Thank everyone for contributing, and congratulate yourselves on how much you accomplished in 15 minutes!**

RESOURCES

Barker, M.J., & Scheele, J. (2020). *Gender: A graphic guide.* Icon Books.

Erickson-Schroth, L. (2022). *Trans bodies, trans selves: A resource by and for transgender communities* (2nd Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Minus18 (2017, March 30). *Trans 101 - The Basics* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/-3ZzpTxjgRw

PrideVMC. (2023). *Gender diversity guide.* https://pridevmc.org/gender-diversity-guide/

PrideVMC. (2021). *Gender Identity Bill of Rights.* https://pridevmc.org/gibor/

The Safe Zone Project. (n.d.). *Resources.*
https://thesafezoneproject.com/resources/

The inclusion of resources by this author does not imply or constitute an endorsement by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the Veterinary Medical Association Executives.