Appendix 1: Sexual Orientation and Gender Definitions and Terminology

 Ally — A person who is not a member of a targeted social group who takes action or speaks up to challenge discrimination or prejudice against a targeted social group. For example, straight allies speak and act against LGBTQ discrimination and prejudice or while allies speak and act against discrimination against people of color.

 Biological/Anatomical Sex — The physical characteristics typically used to assign a person’s gender at birth, such as chromosomes, hormones, internal and external genitalia and reproductive organs. Given the potential variation in all of these, biological sex must be seen as a spectrum or range of possibilities rather than a binary set of two options.

 Biphobia — Describes a range of negative feelings toward bisexuality and bisexual people as a social group or as individuals. People of any sexual orientation can experience such feelings of aversion. Biphobia is based on negative bisexual stereotypes.

 Bisexual — A sexual orientation toward women and men in which gender is not a determining factor in romantic or sexual feelings toward another person.

 Cisgender — An adjective often used to refer to someone whose gender identity is the same as the gender assigned to them at birth.

 FTM (Female-to-Male) — A person who was assigned to the female gender at birth but has a male gender identity.

 Gay — An adjective describing sexual orientation toward others of the same sex. Gay is also used to refer exclusively to gay men.

 Gender — The complex relationship between physical traits and one’s internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither, as well as one’s outward presentations and behaviors related to that perception. Biological sex and gender are different; gender is not inherently connected to one’s physical anatomy.

 Gender Expression — Refers to the ways in which people externally communicate their gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, voice and other forms of presentation. Gender expression also works the other way as people assign gender to others based on their appearance, mannerisms and other gendered characteristics. Many transgender people seek to make their external appearance — their gender expression — congruent with their internal gender identity through clothing, pronouns, names, and, in some cases, hormones and surgical procedures. All people have gender expression, not just transgender people.

 Gender Fluidity — Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may even change from day to day. Gender fluid individuals do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys.

 Gender Identity — One’s inner concept of self as male, female, both or neither. One’s gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth. Most people become conscious of their gender identity between the ages of 18 months and 3 years. Most people have a gender identity that matches their assigned gender at birth. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their assigned gender. Some of these individuals choose to live socially as the other gender and may also hormonally and/or surgically change their bodies to more fully express their gender identity. All people have gender identity, not just transgender people.

 Gender Nonconforming/Gender Variant — Refer to individuals whose behaviors and/or interests fall outside what is considered typical for their assigned gender at birth. Someone who identifies as “gender nonconforming” is not necessarily transgender. To the contrary, many people who are not transgender do not conform to gender stereotypes in their appearance, clothing, physical characteristics, interests or activities.

 Genderqueer — This term represents a blurring of the lines around gender identity and sexual orientation. Genderqueer individuals typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and sexual orientation. This term is typically assigned an adult identifier and not used in reference to preadolescent children.
Champions of Respect

A shorthand description of sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions typically included when discussing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex.

Lesbian — An adjective or noun used to describe the sexual orientation of women who are sexually attracted to women.

Gay — A 19th century medicalized description of same-sex behavior or attraction or people who are sexually attracted to others of the same sex.

Heterosexual — Used as a noun or adjective to describe sexual orientation toward people of another sex. Heterosexual people are also referred to as “straight.”

Heterosexism — A social system of individual beliefs and actions, institutional rules and cultural norms that privileges heterosexual relations and people and disadvantages same-sex relationships and lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Heteronormativity — A cultural norm that assumes that heterosexuality is the only normal and acceptable sexual orientation.

Hermaphroditism — Describes a range of negative feelings toward lesbian and gay people.

Homophobia — Describes a range of negative feelings toward lesbian and gay people as individuals or as a group. Homophobia is manifested in hostile or derisive language or actions directed toward lesbian and gay people or those assumed to be gay or lesbian.

Intersex — An estimated one in 2,000 babies is born with an “intersex” condition or disorders of sex development (DSD). People with intersex conditions (DSD) are born with physically mixed or atypical bodies, reproductive organs, and genitalia. These characteristics may not be visible and individuals may not be aware of the condition. Having an intersex condition does not necessarily affect a person’s gender identity.

Heterosexual Ally — A heterosexual person who is committed in word and deed to counteracting homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and discrimination against or harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

MTF (Male-to-Female) — A person who was assigned to the male sex at birth but has a female gender identity.

Queer — An umbrella term that is sometimes used to refer to gender and sexual minorities. Because of its history as a negative description of lesbian and gay people and its association with radicalism, the use of queer is somewhat controversial.

Questioning — An adjective used to describe people, especially young people, who are in the process of defining their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Same-Gender Loving — A term used by some African-American LGBT individuals to describe their sexual orientation in a way that differentiates their experiences and identity from those of white European American LGBT people.

Sexual Orientation — Refers to being romantically or sexually attracted to people of a specific gender, or in the case of bisexuals, any gender. Our sexual orientation and our gender identity are separate, distinct parts of our overall identity. Although children may not yet be aware of their sexual orientation, they usually have a strong sense of their gender identity.

Straight (Heterosexual) — A heterosexual person who was assigned to the male sex at birth but has a female gender identity.

Transition — The process by which a transgender individual lives consistently with his or her gender identity, and which may (but does not necessarily) include changing the person’s body through hormones and/or surgical procedures. Transition can occur in three ways: social transition through changes in clothing, hairstyle, name and/or pronouns; hormonal transition through the use of medicines such as hormone “blockers” or cross hormones to promote gender-based body changes; and/or surgical transition in which a person’s body is modified through the addition or removal of gender-related physical traits. Based on current medical knowledge and practice, genital reconstructive surgery is not required in order to transition. Most transgender people in the United States do not have genital reconstuctive surgery.

Transgender — A person whose gender identity does not match the sex assigned at birth. This individual usually desires to physically alter his or her body surgically and/or hormonally. This physical transition is a complicated, multi-step process that may take years and may include, but is not limited to, cross-gender hormone therapy and a variety of surgical procedures. The precise treatments required vary from person to person.

Transphobia — Describes a range of negative feelings toward transgender or gender nonconforming people as individuals or as a group. Transphobia is manifested in hostile or derisive language or actions directed toward transgender or gender nonconforming people.

Two Spirit — A term chosen to distinctly express Native American/First Nations gender identity and gender variance. “Two-spirit” or “two- spirit” usually indicates a person whose body simultaneously manifests both a masculine and a feminine spirit.