

**TALK AND  
TAKE ACTION:**

**PARENTS' AND  
CAREGIVERS'  
GUIDE TO  
COMBATING  
LGBTQ+  
DISCRIMINATION**

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# Introduction

Throughout history, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and more **(LGBTQ+)** people have often been bullied, teased, or discriminated against because of how they dress, what they look like, or who and how they love. Learning this history helps us understand all that queer and trans people have overcome and shows the beauty and strength of the LGBTQ+ community.

This guide, focused on countering LGBTQ+ discrimination, has been written in partnership with GLSEN. GLSEN is the leading national education organization working to ensure that LGBTQ+ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. The guide is designed to provide parents and caregivers with the tools, tips, and language they need to talk with their children about the discrimination the LGBTQ+ community faces in the United States.

We recognize having conversations focused on discrimination and hate can be challenging at any age. We hope this guide will help parents and caregivers feel supported as they navigate these tough topics with their kids.

Finally, we want our families to leave these conversations empowered to make change. This guide provides simple, but significant, action steps families can take together to create a more inclusive world.

# TALKING WITH KIDS ABOUT LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION: BEFORE YOU BEGIN

When preparing to talk about topics around identity, gender, and sexuality with children, it is important to maximize their opportunities to learn, while at the same time, ensuring they leave the conversation feeling supported, informed and safe. This guide delves into misgendering, discriminatory acts, and other forms of persecution the LGBTQ+ community has endured, which can be challenging for all of us to read and discuss.

These topics may lead to broader conversations in your family about acceptance, empathy, inclusion, identity, and more. If this is the moment to talk in greater depth with your child about their own identity development, there are some great resources and family activities included in this guide to start with, and additional help in the resources section.

Here are tips you can use to support conversations with kids about tough topics.

**1. Check in with yourself first.** Take stock of your own feelings and perceptions related to the information included in the guide. Be aware of emotions that you may have when talking about these topics and acknowledge your own biases. If you hold personal or religious beliefs that make these conversations challenging to prepare for, consider beginning with the universal values of kindness, fairness, and equality. Take some time to examine how your beliefs, values, and language may impact your children's perspectives on the LGBTQ+ community. If your family has been personally impacted by discrimination or hate, it may be difficult to revisit those painful experiences. Consider sharing your thoughts with another trusted adult before engaging with your own children.

**2. Review the guides.** Being here—reading this—means you care and your willingness to learn the skills needed to hold these conversations with your kids sends a powerful message. These topics are challenging and you may need help navigating them. If that's the case, take time to look through the Talk and Take Action Guides. Each guide will provide you with an introduction to its topic, a historical and contemporary context for why these conversations need to take place, and how you, as a family, can take action. For families with LGBTQ+ members, these conversations may already be happening at home. For families with children who may be exploring or questioning their gender identity and/or sexual preference, talking proactively and explicitly about this topic can build trust with your children and indicate that it is safe to share their feelings and questions with you. Focus on the information that you feel is meaningful and relevant to your child and your conversation's focus.



**3. Lay the foundation.** Before diving into tough topics like bullying, discrimination, bias, and hate, it's important to lay the foundation for a safe and secure dialogue. Begin by letting kids know what you'd like to talk about and make sure they know no question is off limits. Speak calmly, clearly and use reassuring words and gestures. It might also be helpful to have general, more informal conversations about fairness and equality before approaching these topics. Talk with your child about your family values, how you cultivate kindness, and what you admire about those who are caring, compassionate, and equitable.

**4. Prepare to be transparent.** Talking honestly and openly about difficult topics with children models positive behaviors that foster open lines of communication, build trust, and strengthen bonds. Let kids know that these kinds of conversations are difficult, even for adults. Acknowledging this difficulty tells kids that even though a topic may be uncomfortable, it is important to talk about. As you are tackling tough topics at home, you shouldn't attempt or expect to cover everything in a single conversation. These kinds of conversations will be ongoing. Aim to keep them age appropriate and accessible.

**5. Gauge what they know.** Kids gain information implicitly, or informally, through what they see, hear, and experience. Asking children what they already know about a topic is a great starting point for conversation. Expand on what they bring up to deepen their understanding and fill in their knowledge gaps. Children often notice and absorb much more than we expect.

**6. Lean in and listen.** In a world full of distractions, now is the time to give children your undivided attention. Encourage them to ask questions, and let them know you'll do your best to answer them. Pay attention to the questions they ask and any emotional responses that may be evoked by the information being presented. This means not only listening to their words, but looking for cues to how they are feeling from their body language. When your child shows signs they are feeling uneasy, sad, or scared, reassure them that they are safe and cared for.

**7. Learn with them.** Answer children's questions as clearly and honestly as you can, using kid-friendly language and definitions. Don't feel obligated to answer right away. Slow down, take a pause, and repeat the question. This ensures that you don't answer right away just for the sake of answering and providing information that is incorrect. And, if you don't know the answer to a question, that's OK! Saying "I don't know" creates an opportunity for you to learn together. If you are caught off guard by a difficult question and are unsure of how to respond in the moment, try one of these:

- *"That's a really big question! Let's explore it together."*
- *"That's a great question. Let's find out more together."*

**8. Consider and validate their feelings.** *"It's not right that people are being mean to people just because of how they identify!"* Validate their feelings and explain that being upset about this means this is something important that we need to pay attention to. Allowing them to express how they feel lets them know that it's OK to feel emotions such as sadness or anger.

**9. Help them frame the situation.** Providing kids with context is useful when helping them make sense of acts of bullying or violence. If they ask why someone would direct hate at someone based on their identity or culture, you could say, “Some people are scared of other people who are different from themselves and can be mean to them because of it. They may treat queer and trans people badly because of their personal or religious beliefs, and they may have gotten wrong ideas about the LGBTQ+ community from stereotypes we see and hear in the media. Without correct information and understanding, they sometimes bully or harm other people and think it’s OK based on their beliefs.”

**10. Empower them to make a difference.** Tackling tough topics can sometimes leave us feeling sad, angry, or hopeless. While these feelings are valid, we can use them to engage in meaningful actions to fight against hate and discrimination. For example, learning about and standing in solidarity with others or volunteering time to a cause can make a big difference. If you need support, each guide includes a list of actions you, as a family, can take to leave the conversation feeling empowered and prepared to build a more just and compassionate world.



# ADDRESSING LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION AND ITS ROOT CAUSE

## **Agender**

Some agender people define their gender as being neither a man nor a woman while others understand themselves as not having any gender.

## **Bias**

A tendency to lean in a certain direction, either in favor of or against a particular thing or group of people. Some people might be biased against a certain ethnicity because they have been told negative things about that ethnic group.

## **Bisexual**

Someone who is attracted to two or more genders (such as men and women), but not necessarily all possible genders.

## **Discrimination**

Unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity, like their race, gender, ability, religion, or culture.

## **Gay**

Someone who is generally attracted to someone of the same gender.

## **Gender**

A person's sense of being a boy, girl, neither, or something in between.

## **Gender Identity**

An individual's internal sense of their own gender(s) or no gender.

## **Gender Roles**

Socially constructed expectations about behaviors, appearances, and roles within a family, community or job, that reinforces the gender binary. For example, the belief that only boys should play video games and girls should play with dolls.

## **Genderqueer**

A gender that is neither man nor woman, possibly a mix of genders, and possibly fluid.

## **Lesbian**

Someone who generally considers themselves a girl who is attracted to other girls.

## **LGBTQ+**

An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and more.

## Nonbinary

People who identify as a gender other than boy or girl.

## Queer

This term is intentionally hard to define. It does not typically include straight identities, rather, it is connected to LGB+ sexual orientation and trans, including nonbinary gender identities.

## Sexual Orientation

The gender(s) a person is attracted to. Examples of sexual orientations include bisexual, asexual, lesbian, gay, and pansexual.

## Transgender/Trans

A term for people whose gender does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

**LGBTQ+** is the inclusive term used to represent the [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer](#) community. The plus sign (+) encompasses people who identify themselves in other ways like [agender](#), [nonbinary](#), or [genderqueer](#). Although we may hear or see this term used frequently today, it was only created within the last 30 years by LGBTQ+ activists to unify, empower, and give voice to a group of people who have been judged and mistreated by larger society for hundreds of years.

**Gender Identity** is someone's internal, or inner, sense of their own **gender(s)** or no gender. It is how they feel on the inside. Someone may identify as a girl or a boy, woman or man, or they might identify as agender, genderqueer, nonbinary, or just as a person. People can choose not to use any specific term to identify with or use a term that shifts or changes over time. Gender identity, the internal sense of self, is indisputable.

Societies have reinforced strong, deep-seated [gender roles](#) and **norms** that have developed over centuries around the world including in the United States. The gender binary was constructed to determine only two genders (male and female) and how they should act, look, like, love, and feel based on that gender. When someone doesn't look like or act like what society thinks they should, they can be viewed by others as "weird," "different," or "wrong."

Some people believe that it is wrong to be a part of the LGBTQ+ community because of what they have learned through their own experiences and interactions with others. Misconceptions, or untrue ideas, people hold about identity are rooted in

## CAREGIVER REFLECTION

- Take a moment to think about your gender identity. How do you identify today? Is this the same as when you were a child?
- What does it mean to you to have that particular gender identity? What are the things and/or behaviors that make you feel you within that gender identity?
- The attribution of our gender identity by others is dependent on factors like culture, language, and age.
- How does attribution change depending on what spaces you're in and who you're around?
- Can you think of moments when you may have read or addressed someone in a way that may not have honored how they identified on the inside?



how gender roles and norms have been learned over time. Throughout history, people who didn't fit society's ideas of gender and sexual orientation faced **bias, discrimination**, shame, and violence.

Today, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights and respect is a response to the hate and fear people have experienced because of who they are, how they live, and who they love. People's identities, sexual orientation, and what makes them who they are, shouldn't be shamed, hated, or hidden. We all have the right to express ourselves and should feel safe, supported, and celebrated in being exactly who we are.

## HISTORY OF ACTIVISM AGAINST LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION

### Activism

The actions people take to change policies, laws, or rules that are unfair or unjust.

### Drag Performer

A person who wears the clothing of another gender, often involving showing exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics. Individuals may perform as drag kings (in drag presenting as male) or drag queens (in drag presenting as female) when performing gender as an imitation, art, or entertainment. A drag performer is not the same as someone who is trans, although some trans people are drag performers.

Throughout time, LGBTQ+ people have often been teased, harmed, or discriminated against because of how they dress, what they look like, or who and how they love. To combat this hate, there have been many meaningful acts of LGBTQ+ **activism**. Learning this history of activism helps us understand all that queer and trans people have overcome, and shows the beauty, strength, and resilience of the LGBTQ+ community.

### 1969: Stonewall Riots

- The LGBTQ+ community in New York City was tired of being treated badly by the police, who were allowed to arrest trans people or **drag queens** just for the clothes they were wearing.
- On June 28, 1969, customers at the Stonewall Inn, an LGBTQ+ nightclub and place many people went to because it was safer to be with other LGBTQ+ people, came together to fight back for their rights during a regular police raid, which started the Stonewall Riots.
- Today, we honor known Black and Brown trans women like Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and Miss Major Griffin Gracy as the godmothers of this act of protest and the following movement.

### 1966: The Compton's Cafeteria Riot

- Compton's Cafeteria was a popular place for queer and trans youth in San Francisco to come together, have a meal, and feel safe to be themselves.
- In 1966, the police went to Compton's Cafeteria often, and arrested the queer and trans people who ate there because of how they dressed or what they looked like.
- One night, the "street kids" at Compton's decided to fight back against police harassment they faced. This was one of the earliest recorded acts of LGBTQ+ resistance in the United States.



Learn more about these activists and others using GLSEN's

[LGBTQ History Cards!](#)

### 1996: Day of Silence

- In 1996, students at the University of Virginia organized the first Day of Silence as a project on nonviolent protests assigned by their professor, Dr. Julian Bond.
- This transformed into a student-led national event where LGBTQ+ youth and their allies take a vow of silence to highlight the erasure of LGBTQ+ topics in schools. Today, millions of students in all 50 states participate.



### 2020: Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board

- Gavin Grimm sued his Virginia high school when he was not allowed to use the bathroom simply because he is transgender.
- The school forced Grimm to use a separate bathroom, sending a message that something was wrong with him.
- Even after Grimm got his gender and name legally changed, the school would not change his paperwork, which hurt him even after he graduated.
- In 2020, Grimm won his case against his school. They were wrong for not letting him use the boys' bathroom and not changing his paperwork.

In every example of activism listed here, there was a person, or a group of people, who knew something wasn't right. To speak up against the unfairness they heard, saw, or experienced, they had to stand up to others who did not support or share their views.

### 1996: Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)

- In 1996, the United States decided to only recognize marriages between one man and one woman in the Defense of Marriage Act. Many states went on to recognize other types of marriages in their own laws, but many LGBTQ+ people were still excluded from marriage.
- Edie Windsor, an activist and engineer, decided to challenge these unequal rights in 2009 when her wife, Thea Spyer, passed away. Even though their marriage was recognized in the state where they lived, Windsor was not given the same rights as other married people because she was a lesbian.
- Windsor sued the United States, and eventually won. This paved the way for marriage equality to pass in all 50 states, in a 2015 court case.

### 1998: East High Gay Straight Alliance v. Board of Education of Salt Lake City School District

- In 1998, a group of students at East High School in Utah decided to form a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), a club for students to show their support for the LGBTQ+ community.
- School leaders tried to keep the GSA from meeting by saying they were going to ban all student groups, but they continued to allow other clubs to meet. This made it clear that the only reason the GSA was not allowed to meet was because the club's members supported LGBTQ+ people.
- The GSA student leaders brought the school leaders to court and won, giving students the right to celebrate LGBTQ+ identity at school.

### FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think activism is an important part of making change?
- How do you think these activists felt? Why do you think they stood up and fought back? What kind of impact did they have on LGBTQ+ rights and history?
- How is the LGBTQ+ community supported or recognized in your school or community?
- Are they facing issues that need solving? What actions can you take to find a solution? Whose help do you need?

# LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION TODAY AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE ACTION

## Racism

The belief that one race is better than another—and having the power to create systems (e.g., educational system, legal system, etc.) that support that belief.

## Transgender

A term for people whose gender does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

LGBTQ+ people have taken action to get equal rights throughout history but the fight isn't over! Today, we still see anti-LGBTQ+ **bias** and inequity in everyday interactions and language, in politics, our health care system, and in work, schools, and even sports. A [2013 GLSEN research paper](#) revealed that one-third of the LGBTQ+ students reported that they avoided gym class because they felt uncomfortable and unsafe.

More recently, the [2019 GLSEN National School Climate Survey](#) found that more than half of **transgender** students said they were prevented from using bathrooms or locker rooms that align, or match, with their gender identity. Even in schools with more open and inclusive transgender policies, less than half of transgender and **nonbinary** students reported that their school had specific policies that allowed them to participate in sports that align with their gender identity. Preventing equal access to these opportunities is a form of discrimination and prohibits, or stops, LGBTQ+ kids from feeling safe, welcome, and comfortable in their own schools.

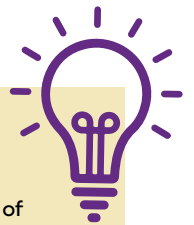
In addition to feeling unsafe or unwelcome in their environment, those who face discrimination may also feel many difficult internal, or inside, emotions including fear, anxiety or worry, shame, sadness, anger, self-doubt, or loneliness. These feelings can take a toll on their mental and physical health, relationships, school or work life, and self-esteem.

Bullying adds to these feelings of isolation. In the 2019 GLSEN survey mentioned above, the majority, or most, of the respondents reported experiencing harassment or physical violence within the last year because of their personal characteristics like sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. LGBTQ+ students of color reported experiencing not only identity harassment but racism, as well. Because of this, they were the most likely to skip school (due to feeling unsafe) and had the highest instances of depression, or sadness. All students, no matter how they identify, deserve a welcoming and safe learning environment.

As a society, we are still learning about how to find our commonalities and accept and celebrate our differences. Recognizing and respecting people's perspectives, cultures, beliefs, and identities is a great first step. Right now, young leaders around the world are starting to use their voices to make change, stick up for others, and do what is right.

Here is a list of small ways you can take action as a family:

- Be kind and welcoming to others who have different ideas, perspectives, and identities.
- Read stories by LGBTQ+ authors and about LGBTQ+ experiences.
- Research historic people in the LGBTQ+ community and their contributions.
- Find events near you that celebrate the LGBTQ+ community.
- Display LGBTQ+ art, flags, or signs at home or in your community.
- Do not assume that you know someone's gender based on their appearance.
- Say something if someone is being bullied or picked on because of who they are. Tell an adult or tell the person being mean that they are saying hurtful things and it is not OK.
- Use inclusive language. Inclusive language means using people's correct pronouns and steering clear of words and phrases that overlook people's individual identity like "guys" or "boys and girls."
- Ask new people you meet what their pronouns are and use them.
- Express and share your identity!



## CAREGIVER REFLECTION

When parents and caregivers model how to show solidarity to children, young people can see themselves as helpers. Think about the last time you showed solidarity toward others. Reflect on how you felt and the impact of your actions on others.

- What would you like your children to do if they witness hate or harmful acts?
- What would you tell them to encourage them to act in solidarity?

School can be a tough place for many children, especially those who are seen as "different."

- How can you encourage your child to share their school experiences with you?
- What behaviors can you show to demonstrate to your child you're listening and interested in what they have to share?
- What are some things you can do and say if you learn your child is experiencing discrimination or bullying in their school or classroom environment?





# TAKING ACTION! DISCUSSION GUIDES

## CELEBRATING ALL FAMILIES

Everyone's family looks a little different, but all types of families are amazing and real. Some kids grow up with a mom and a dad, while others may be raised by two moms, two dads, two nonbinary parents, parents who are transgender, single parents, other family members, or members of their community. Not all families are related by blood and some are even chosen through friendships. Any type of family is beautiful; what matters is that everyone is loved, supported, and cared for.

There is a lack of representation of LGBTQ+ families and people in the media and school curricula. According to a GLAAD research report of the 2020–2021 TV season, only 9.1% of regular characters on primetime TV were LGBTQ+. The [2019 National School Climate Survey from GLSEN](#) showed that the majority of students (66.8%) are not exposed to LGBTQ+ people, history, or events in their lessons. Representation in these areas teaches us about diverse people and families while promoting respect and acceptance. It also provides LGBTQ+ youth with a sense of belonging and belief in themselves.

## FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What qualities make your family unique and special?
- What kinds of things do you do as a family to show your love, support, and care for each other?
- What do you do to show that love and support to your friends, neighbors, and schoolmates?
- Do you see families like yours in books, movies, or TV shows? Why or why not? How does that make you feel?

**HOW CAN YOU SHOWCASE AND CELEBRATE DIFFERENT KINDS OF FAMILY UNITS TO YOUR KIDS?**

# ASKING, NOT GUESSING

## Cisgender

Someone who is not transgender. Cisgender people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

## Intersex

People who are born with physical characteristics that do not align, or fit, with one specific “typical” gender. This can include reproductive organs, genitals, hormones, chromosomes, or any combination thereof.

## Pronouns

Words like he, she, and they that you use to talk about somebody. If possible, it is best to always ask someone their pronouns and to not make a guess.

When we’re born, we are probably labeled male, female, or **intersex**. For some people, these labels line up with their gender identity, and we refer to these people as **cisgender**. For others, these labels may not fit their gender identity, and we refer to them as trans or transgender. For example, someone might be assigned male at birth, but identify as a girl, and they would be a transgender girl. You can never know someone’s gender identity based on their appearance, so if you’re curious, you can ask: “What gender do you identify as?” or “What are your **pronouns?**”

We use pronouns like she, he, and they all the time! Pronouns make it easy for us to talk about people without having to use their names. For example, you could say, “Molly likes dogs,” or “She likes dogs.” Pronouns can sometimes be a signifier of someone’s gender identity, but not always. We do not want to assume people’s gender identity based on their physical expression, like their clothing, hairstyle, or mannerisms. People can choose the pronouns that they want others to call them by when not using their name. By providing an opportunity for people to share their pronouns, you’re showing respect for their gender identity and not judging them based on their appearance. It’s easy! Here’s an example: “Hi, my name is Nic, and I use they/them pronouns. What’s your name and what pronouns do you use?”

## FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How do you think a person would feel if someone didn’t use the pronouns they want to be called? How would you feel if someone didn’t use the pronouns you want to be called?
- How can you make someone new in your class, neighborhood, or sports team feel welcome? What can you do to make sure you know what pronouns they use?
- Why do you think it’s important to show respect for each other’s identities?

# CALLING OUT GENDER STEREOTYPES

## **Femininity**

A set of socially constructed attributes, behaviors, and roles generally associated with women and girls.

## **Gender Binary**

The social system that tells us there can only be cisgender men and women, and that there can be no alternatives in terms of gender or expression.

## **Gender Stereotypes**

Social construct of behaviors, interests, and abilities based on gender.

## **Masculinity**

A set of socially constructed attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with men and boys.

## **Stereotype**

A widely held and oversimplified idea about a type of person or group. Racial, religious, and cultural stereotypes are harmful, shape interactions between people, impact policy, and are often believed to be true even when they are false.

How many times have you heard someone say that certain things were “only for boys” or “only for girls”? Comments like these are the result of gender roles and **gender stereotypes**. A **stereotype** is a simple idea that many people believe about a large group of people that is not true for everyone in that group. Gender roles and stereotypes teach boys and girls they have to behave a certain way based on their gender. For example, “All girls like to wear dresses” and “Boys shouldn’t cry when they’re sad.”

**Parent/Caregiver Callout:** Remember, some people aren’t boys or girls. Use GLSEN’s [Gender Triangle Education Guide](#) as a resource to learn more about gender identity.

These kinds of thoughts keep people from doing things they want, enjoy, or need to do because they’ve been told those things are not OK for their gender. This can also erase, or overlook, people who may identify or express themselves outside of the **gender binary** of **masculinity** and **femininity**, or gender altogether. Finally, these types of beliefs can make some people feel badly or think something is wrong with them, which isn’t right and can be hurtful.

People of any gender can like pink or blue, play with dolls or trucks, and wear dresses or pants.

## FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What would you say to someone being bullied or picked on because of who they are, what they like, or how they dress?
- What are some other gender stereotypes about boys, girls, and children, you may have heard or experienced? You can include activities, colors, and behaviors.
- Are there any stereotypes that you fit? Are there any stereotypes that don't fit you? Do these stereotypes have to be true for all girls, all boys, or all children? Why or why not?
- What are some ways that you break gender stereotypes normally linked to your gender?

## REVIEW, REFLECT, AND REIMAGINE

### FAMILY REFLECTION JOURNAL

As a family, review and reflect on your conversation about countering LGBTQ+ discrimination using the prompts and activities below. Practice using personal pronouns, search for and call out gender stereotypes, and celebrate all the things that make you, you!

## LITTLE WORDS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Personal pronouns are a way that people can identify and express their gender. People can choose the pronouns, like she, he, or they, that they want others to call them by when they're not using their name. They may be little words but they make a big difference! Practice using the personal pronouns for Nadia, Sebastian, and Hahir by filling in the sentences below.



Nadia the snake identifies as a girl and uses **she/her/hers** pronouns.



Sebastian the bunny identifies as a boy and uses **he/him/his** pronouns.



Hahir identifies as nonbinary. They don't identify as a boy or a girl, just a hamster. Hahir uses **they/them/theirs** pronouns.



**For each statement, fill in the missing name or pronoun based on each character.**



\_\_\_\_\_ went to the park. They rode their bike and picked flowers.



Nadia can't wait for recess. \_\_\_\_\_ wants to see \_\_\_\_\_ friends.



Sebastian is so hungry \_\_\_\_\_ could eat all day.



\_\_\_\_\_ loves \_\_\_\_\_ art class where \_\_\_\_\_

paints and draws.



Hadhir's parents love \_\_\_\_\_ very much.



\_\_\_\_\_ likes to go to the beach with \_\_\_\_\_ friends and family.

**REMEMBER: EVERYONE GETS TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN PRONOUNS AND TO DECIDE HOW THEY IDENTIFY THEIR GENDER. USING THE PRONOUNS THAT SOMEONE SHARES IS A REALLY IMPORTANT WAY TO SHOW RESPECT.**

**Write a story about Hadhir the hamster, and draw a picture to go with it. What does Hadhir like to do? What do they look like? What should people know about Hadhir?**

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# THAT'S A (GENDER) STEREOTYPE!

Both kids and adults have all different kinds of interests, strengths, and passions. Some people believe that certain things like toys, clothing, colors, jobs, and more only apply to or can be enjoyed by a certain gender. This is a **gender stereotype**.

Below is a list of sentences. Read through them together. If one of them is a stereotype—a simple idea that isn't true for everyone in a group—cross it out using a pen or pencil. If it isn't a stereotype, put a star next to it.

- Some students like recess.
- Girls like to wear dresses.
- Some girls like to draw.
- All of the boys like to play with trucks.
- Teachers are all girls.
- Some students like playing tag.
- Nurses are all girls.
- Some boys like to play with trucks.
- Some students like to dance.

- Boys don't cry.
- All children identify as boys or girls.
- Girls like dolls.
- Some girls like to play with LEGOs.
- All children like to draw.
- Some boys like to play with LEGOs.
- Girls like the color purple.
- Some children like the color yellow.
- Some boys like the color pink.
- Boys like video games.

**Now, list your own likes and dislikes. Have a friend, family member, or classmate list out some of their likes and dislikes, too. Compare the lists and look for similarities and differences.**

- Do you like or dislike some of the same things?
- What is different about your likes and dislikes?

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# CELEBRATE YOUR IDENTITY!

**Ability** has to do with the different ways that people move or learn or communicate. Think about the tools that you need. Some people need glasses to see, a walker or wheelchair to get around, a computer or sign language to communicate, or a bumpy seat or movement break to help them learn.

**Culture** is a way of living that is passed down in your family or communities. This includes the food you eat, the beliefs you have, the holidays you celebrate, the languages you speak, and more.

**Family** is made up of the people around you who help you grow up.

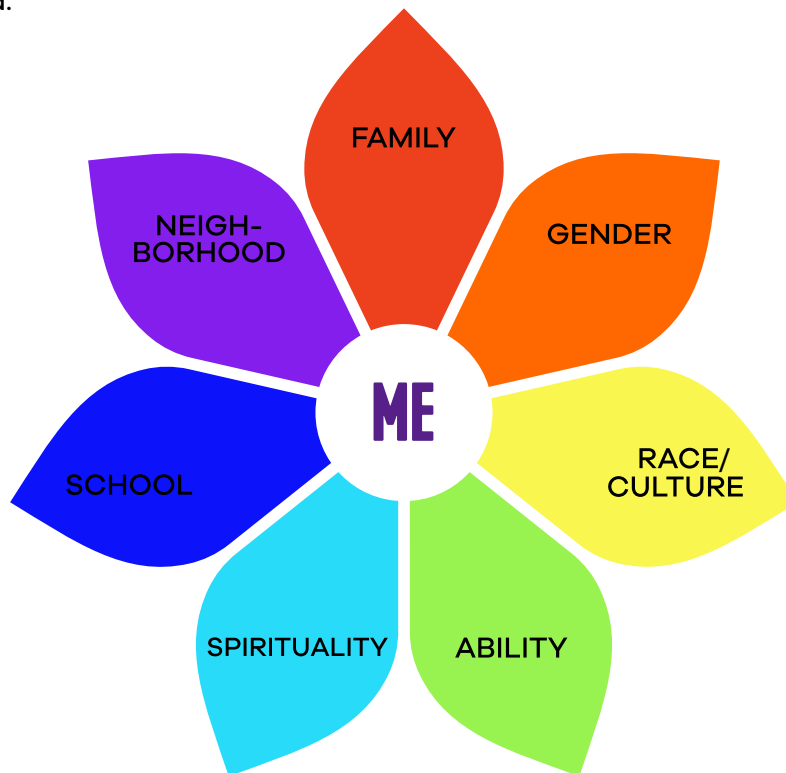
**Gender identity** is how you identify and see yourself. You may identify as a girl or a boy, or you may not.

**Neighborhood** is where you live.

**Race** is a social construct and is used as a way to group people, usually based on skin color, hair texture, and places, countries, or lands that your family (grandparents and great-grandparents and before!) came from.

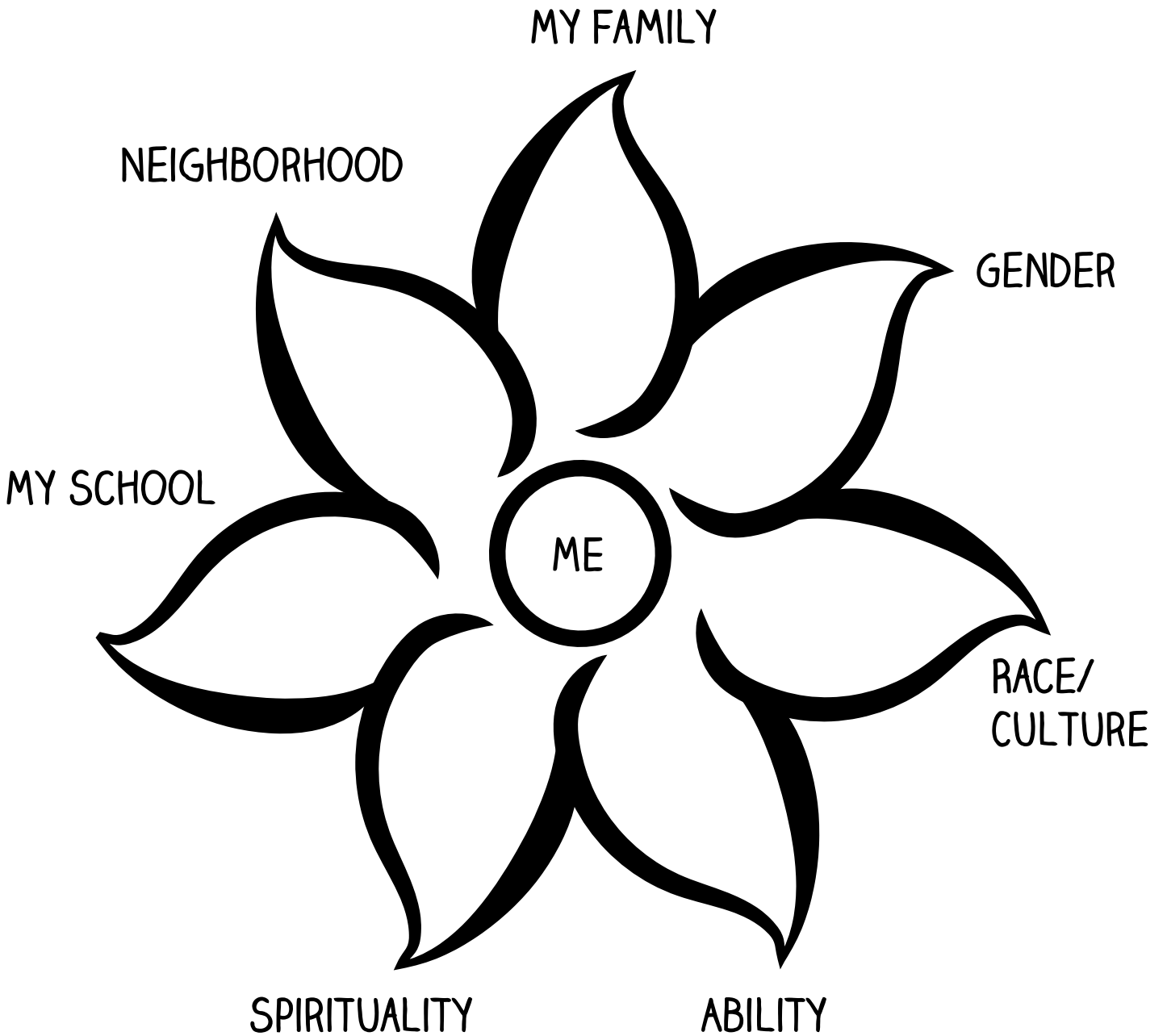
**School** is where you learn (what grade you are in and where you go).

**Spirituality** has to do with your connection to the universe, a religion, or other ways of practicing kindness in the world.



Using words or pictures, fill out this identity flower for a character from a book, movie, or TV show.

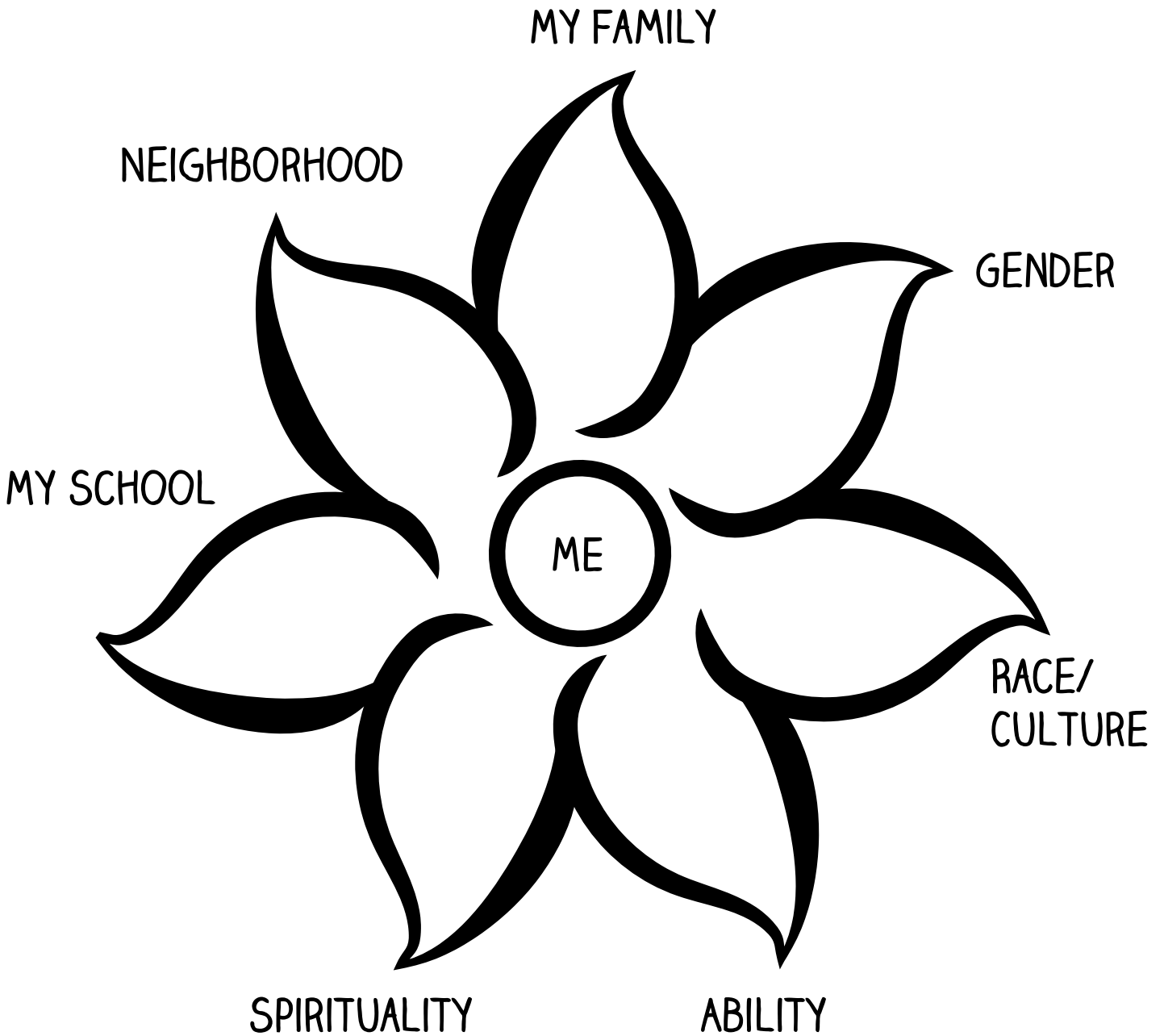
\_\_\_\_\_ 'S IDENTITY FLOWER





Now, fill out this identity flower for yourself. What groups feel right to you? What makes you special and unique?

\_\_\_\_\_ 'S IDENTITY FLOWER



# GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

## Kindergarten to 3rd Grade (ages 5-8)

**Bisexual:** Someone who is attracted to two or more genders (such as men and women), but not necessarily all possible genders.

**Drag Performer:** A person who wears the clothing of another gender, often involving showing exaggerated, stereotypical gender characteristics. Individuals may perform as drag kings (in drag presenting as male) or drag queens (in drag presenting as female) when performing gender as an imitation, art or entertainment. A drag performer is not the same as someone who is trans, although some trans people are drag performers.

**Femininity:** A set of socially constructed attributes, behaviors, and roles generally associated with women and girls.

**Gay:** Someone who is generally attracted to someone of the same gender.

**Gender:** A person's sense of being a boy, girl, neither, or something in between.

**Identity:** The many different pieces that fit together to shape our experiences and ultimately make us who we are.

**LGBTQ+:** An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and more.

**Lesbian:** Someone who generally considers themselves a girl who is attracted to other girls.

**Masculinity:** A set of socially constructed (or made up) attributes, behaviors and roles associated with men and boys.

**Nonbinary:** People who identify as a gender other than boy or girl.

**Pronouns:** Words like she, he, and they that you use to talk about somebody. It is best to always ask someone their pronouns if possible and to not make a guess.

**Social Construct:** Shared ideas that exist because people in a society made them up and agreed on them.

**Stereotype:** A widely believed and oversimplified idea about a type of person or group that is not true of the whole group.

**Transgender/Trans:** A term for people whose gender does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

## 4th Grade and 5th Grade (ages 9-11)

**Agender:** Some agender people define their gender as being neither a man nor a woman, while others understand themselves as not having any gender.

**Allosexual:** Someone who experiences sexual attraction.

**Asexual/Ace:** A person who does not experience sexual attraction.

**Assigned Gender at Birth/AGAB:** This refers to what gender someone was assigned at birth. This may or may not match up with someone's current gender identity.

**Cisgender:** Someone who is not transgender. Cisgender people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Gender Binary:** The social system that tells us there can only be cisgender men and women, and that there can be no alternatives in terms of gender or expression.

**Gender Expression:** How one can express their gender outwardly.

**Gender Identity:** An individual's internal sense of their own gender(s) or no gender.

**Gender Neutral:** Something that's not only for a specific gender. Instead, it's for all genders.

**Gender Nonconforming:** Someone who does not fully conform to the expectations and expression around their gender that their society enforces.

**Gender Roles:** Socially constructed expectations about behaviors, appearance, and roles within a family, community or job, based on gender that reinforces the gender binary. For example, the belief that only boys should play video games and girls should play with dolls.

**Gender Stereotypes:** Socially constructed, oversimplified ideas of behaviors, interests, and abilities based on gender.

**Genderfluid:** Someone whose gender varies at different times. Sometimes they identify as masculine, other times as feminine, or neither.

**Genderqueer:** A gender that is neither man nor woman, possibly a mix of genders, and possibly fluid.

**Pansexual:** Pansexual is a sexual orientation where the individual has the capacity to be attracted to any person of any gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Queer:** This term is intentionally hard to define. It does not typically include straight identities, rather, it is connected to LGBTQ+ sexual orientation and trans including nonbinary gender identities.

**Sexual Orientation:** The gender(s) a person is attracted to. Examples of sexual orientations include bisexual, asexual, lesbian, gay, and pansexual.

**Two-Spirit:** A North American indigenous identity that is directly linked to certain indigenous spiritual and/or religious belief systems.

## 6th Grade and Up

**Autigender:** Autigender is an umbrella term to describe when someone's gender is somehow linked to their neurodivergence.

**Dysphoria:** When someone is uncomfortable or not connecting with their body or gender. It can sometimes feel like wanting to escape or move away from things that are connected to a particular gender.

**Intersex:** People who are born with physical characteristics that do not align, or fit, with one specific "typical" gender. This can include reproductive organs, genitals, hormones, chromosomes, or any combination thereof.

**Neurodivergent:** A person whose brain works in a different way than what is thought of as "normal." This could be from a social, learning, attention, mood, or other function setting.

# RESOURCES

## CHILDREN'S READING LISTS



### Elementary School Books

*Neither*, by Arilie Anderson

*Keesha's South African Adventure*,  
by Cheril N. Clarke

*Sam*, by Dani Gabriel

*Prince & Knight*, by Daniel Haack

*I am Jazz*,  
by Jazz Jennings and Jessica Herthel

*Julián Is a Mermaid*, by Jessica Love

*When Aidan Became a Brother*, by Kyle Lukoff

*A is for Activist*, by Innosanto Nagara

*And Tango Makes Three*,  
by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

*Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag*,  
by Rob Sanders

*Introducing Teddy*, by Jessica Walton

### Middle School Books

*Hazel's Theory of Evolution*, by Lisa Jenn Bigelow

*Hurricane Child*, by Kacen Callender and Kheryn Callender

*Felix Ever After*,  
by Kacen Callender (*Content Warning: Transphobia,  
Allusions to Homophobia, Allusions to Deadnaming,  
Assorted Bullying, Catfishing*)

*King and the Dragonflies*,  
by Kacen Callender

*Me, My Dad and the End of the Rainbow*,  
by Benjamin Dean

*George*, by Alex Gino (*Content Warning: Transphobia,  
Mild Violence*)

*Out! How to Be Your Authentic Self*,  
by Myles McKenna

*Beyond the Gender Binary*, by Alok Vaid Menon

*All Out: The No-Longer Secret Stories of Queer Teens  
Throughout the Ages*, by Sandra Mitchell

*The Stars Beneath Our Feet*,  
by David Barclay Moore

*The Best at It*, by Maulik Pancholy

*Rainbow Revolutionaries: Fifty LGBTQ+ People Who Made  
History*, by Sarah Prager

*The Deep and Dark Blue*, by Niki Smith (*Content Warning:  
Transphobia, Mild Violence*)

*Drama*, by Raina Telgemeier

*How to Be Remy Cameron*, by Julian Winters



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## **Book Resources**

[Rainbow Collection](#)

[Rainbow Library](#)

## **Music**

[Trans and Nonbinary Kid Mix](#)

[Queer Kid Stuff Songs](#)

## **Websites**

[The American Psychological Association LGBTQ Youth Resources](#)

[Coming Out Resource](#)

[Family Acceptance Project](#)

[Gender Spectrum](#)

[Gender Triangle Education Guide](#)

[GLSEN's Day of Silence](#)

[GLSEN Educator Resources](#)

[GLSEN LGBTQ-Visibility and Integration in Elementary Schools](#)

[GLSEN Pronouns Guide](#)

[GLSEN Supporting LGBTQ+ Black, Indigenous, and Youth of Color](#)

[HealthyChildren.org Powered by The American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[LGBTQ+ History Cards](#)

[LGBTQ National Help Center](#)

[PFLAG](#)

[To the Parents \[And Guardians\] of LGBTQ+ Youth](#)

[Trans Action Kit](#)

[The Transgender Language Primer](#)

[The Trevor Project](#)

[When a Student Comes Out to You Today or Any Day](#)

# REFERENCES

[2013 National School Climate Survey](#), **GLSEN**

[2019 National School Climate Survey](#), **GLSEN**

[Changing the Game: Game plan for Parents, Caregivers and Families](#), **GLSEN**

[Elementary School Booklist](#), **GLSEN**

[LGBTQ History](#), **GLSEN**

[Middle School Booklist](#), **GLSEN**

[The Trans Language Primer](#)

[Where We Are on TV](#), **GLAAD**

*Journal of Legal Education*, Volume 67, Number 3, 780-801. "[Racialized Interactions in the Law School Classroom: Pedagogical Approaches to Creating a Safe Learning Environment](#)," **Erin C. Lain.**

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