

Gender Identity Autobiography Prompts

This activity supports autobiographical consideration of your own gender identity (Trevor Project, 2019):

Biological sex	What the doctor declares about you at birth
Gender identity	How you feel on the inside
Gender expression	How you present yourself to others
Gender presentation	How the world sees you
Sexual orientation	Who you are attracted to romantically

Early Childhood

What was your first awareness of your gender identity in any one or more areas of the spectrum—that there are different “genders” and that you are a member of a group?

Describe an early recollection of the following moments. Try to remember details about the circumstances, reactions of others if others were involved, and your feelings and thoughts at the time.

- Yourself as a gendered being
- Someone else noticing and/or calling out an aspect of your gender identity
- Enjoying or appreciating an aspect of your gender identity
- Hiding an aspect of your gender identity
- Being confused by an aspect of gender identity
- Something about the gender identities of your family members or other people

Family Background

What gender identities are represented in your family?

What ideas and beliefs about gender identity did your parents grow up with?

What messages do you recall getting from your parents about gender or from others when you were growing up?

Was gender identity discussed, and if so, which aspects of the spectrum were discussed?

To what degree was and is your family comfortable with your gender identity?

What do you wish your family better understood about your gender identity?

What was the impact of any family-held religious beliefs or norms related to gender identity?

Neighborhood/School/Community

To what extent was diversity of gender identity visible in the neighborhood you grew up in?

What messages and expectations about gender identity were prevalent in your neighborhood, and how did this impact you?

Retrieved from the companion website for *Identity Safe Classrooms, Grades 6–12: Pathways to Belonging and Learning* by Becki Cohn-Vargas, Alexandria Creer Kahn, and Amy Epstein. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com. Copyright © 2021 by Corwin Press, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site or nonprofit organization that has purchased this book.

What was your first encounter with a gender identity you found very different from your own? Describe the situation.

When and where did you first hear the phrase “That’s so gay” or other similar homophobic slurs?

What kinds of models of gender identity did you encounter in school?

To what degree did you have access to learn in school about people across the gender identity spectrum?

What ideas and messages about gender identity were prevalent in school? What ideas and messages did you receive in other settings, such as sports teams, Girl/Boy Scouts, school clubs, places of worship, and the like?

Did you ever feel stigmatized or threatened by your gender identity? Describe.

To what extent did school help you develop a positive gender identity?

Think about an experience of how you learned about an “expected” social behavior or attitude attributed to your gender.

Present and Future

What are the prevalent ideas and messages about gender identity in your workplace, circle of friends, and geographic community? What people and/or conditions support you in developing and holding a positive gender identity?

To what degree do you think about gender identity on a daily/weekly basis, and what are some examples of these thoughts and the situations in which they arise?

What do you encounter (internally or externally) as obstacles to a positive gender identity?

What is a meaningful recent experience you’ve had as an adult regarding gender identity? You may have felt affirmed, confused, threatened, attacked, or been impacted in some other way.

What are your goals regarding gender for the future?