CULTIVATING INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR TRANSGENDER AND NON-BINARY EQUESTRIANS

JUNE 13, 2022
Board of Directors approved the USEF Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan

10 strategies harness our strengths and address challenges in an impactful, sustainable way

Quarterly DEI Community Conversations

www.usef.org/about-us/diversity-inclusion
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HOUSEKEEPING

• Session is being recorded & will be available on-demand on the USEF Learning Center

• Use Q&A function to submit questions for the panelists

• Questions submitted in advance will be prioritized

• Additional options for feedback & questions:
  • [www.usef.org/compete/feedback](http://www.usef.org/compete/feedback)
“To bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible.”
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WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?

“To bring the joy of horse sports to as many people as possible.”

www.usef.org/safe-sport

We all have a role to play to ensure our members — especially our young ones — are safe.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport was created to address the issue of abuse in sport. The Center works with National Governing Bodies, including US Equestrian, to enforce the SafeSport Code and the Federal Safe Sport Act. The policies in both the Code and Federal Law are aimed at protecting athletes from harm and abuse and apply to all Olympic and amateur sporting disciplines.
MEET THE PANELISTS

Liam Miranda (he/they)
Research and Training Director, The Inclusion Playbook

Alexis “Lex” Novak (she/they)
Former member of Sharkey Farm IEA Team; student at Western Washington University

Kate Sharkey (she/her)
Trainer and Head Coach of Sharkey Farm and the Sharkey Farm IEA Team; IEA Zone 9 Administrator
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KEY TERMS

Gender Identity
A person’s internal sense of being male, female, or, for some people, a blend of both or neither.

Transgender
An umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-Binary
Those who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the binary categories of male or female.

Cisgender
A person whose gender identity corresponds with their birth-assigned sex.

Gender Expression
The many ways people show their gender to others on the outside, such as the clothing and haircuts they wear or the roles and activities they choose.
Headlines and legislation related to participation in sports.

Youth are at an increased risk of experiencing physical, mental, and social health concerns.

- 86% of trans boys and 88% of trans girls don’t participate in a sport.
- 62% of trans students say their gender identity is the reason they don’t participate in sports outside of gym class.
- 82% of transgender youth aren’t out to their coaches about their gender identity.

Equestrian’s big opportunity!

Sources: TransAthlete, Them, Fenway Health
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CREATING AN INCLUSIVE BARN CULTURE

- Be forthcoming with new clients
- Listen when they talk
- Encourage an open dialogue
- Demonstrate that you are an adult they can trust
- Use inclusive language

Protect your barn culture by modeling direct communication to address questions or concerns
Trusted adults, like a coach, can have a significant impact on young equestrians navigating gender identity.
HOW CAN YOU SIGNAL THAT YOU ARE OPEN TO A CONVERSATION ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY?

- Use inclusive language and examples
- Ask open-ended questions - don’t make assumptions about people’s identities
- Be proactive about policies, practices, and barn culture
- Act if your inclusive practices/culture is compromised
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TIPS FOR MAINTAINING THE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

In the moment...

• Listen, with eye contact

• React honestly – It is OK to ask questions!

• “How can I support you?”
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TIPS FOR MAINTAINING THE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

After they come out...

• Do your best to *adjust pronouns immediately* - but no one expects perfection.

• *Check in* with the rider at a quiet time/place - “How are you feeling at the barn?”

• *Call people in!* Offer support to their peers and other members of the barn community who seem confused or are struggling.

• Find the balance between being supportive and overcompensating - *Remember: we are equestrians* and are here to compete/participate!
MORE EXAMPLES OF WHAT THE CONVERSATION CAN LOOK OR SOUND LIKE

• “How are you doing?”

• “I heard you had a tough day.”

• To parents/guardians: “This might be an awkward question, but...”

• Encourage riders to tell people that their pronouns have changed.

• Walking with the rider before or after the lesson.
PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

• Visit usef.org/safe-sport for resources to support you in protecting the most vulnerable members of our community.

• When talking with youth about gender identity, be mindful of...
  • SafeSport code and reporting processes
  • MAAP policies
  • Stay connected with parents/guardians

• Use the DEI Feedback Hub at usef.org to share your DEI-related experiences at USEF horse shows, as well as any thoughts and ideas regarding advancing DEI at USEF.
Thank you for helping grow our sport and for your hard work to make it inclusive and welcoming!