

WEEK 16

Equity and the LGBTQI+ Community



“Equality means more than passing laws. The struggle is really won in the hearts and minds of the community, where it really counts.”

BARBARA GITTINGS

Did you know? Illinois is the fourth state in the country to legally mandate the study of LGBTQI+ history. This interactive map gives a [snapshot of LGBTQI+ equality by state](#) and counts the number of laws and policies within the state that help drive equality for LGBTQI+ people.

Imagine not feeling accepted at home, in your community or at school because of your gender identity or sexual orientation. Like race and socioeconomic status, inequities for people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQI+) can be seen across many dimensions, including healthcare, education, and in the workplace. Research from the [American Progress Institute](#) shows that LGBTQI+ individuals experience widespread discrimination, often manifesting itself as getting passed over for promotions, being bullied in schools, being refused healthcare, or being denied equal treatment at a store or hotel.

The intersectionality of race and sexual orientation and gender identity also has compounding effects on individuals' well-being: [Black transgender and gender non-conforming individuals experience some of the highest levels of discrimination](#) and threats on their personal safety.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was outlawed in the City of Chicago through an ordinance that was passed in 1988 with the help of activists from [Equality Illinois](#). In 2005, Illinois passed an amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

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Week 16 Challenge

Please **choose one or two** of the below activities to engage with for 15 minutes this week, and if you have time, we encourage you to complete more.



ACTIVITY A

Watch this quick video to [learn why using correct pronouns is so important](#). Add your pronouns to your email signature to show your advocacy for LGBTQI+ individuals.



ACTIVITY B

Watch Ashlee Marie Preston on the [TEDx stage discuss effective allyship](#) and intersectionality from her perspective as a Black transgender woman. She discusses when and how to speak up, and what it truly means to be an ally. Reflect on times you've shown up as an ally or been supported by an ally. How can you contribute to more such experiences?



ACTIVITY C

Read this [article exploring how schools are struggling to support LGBTQI+ students](#) and how we can work to create safe spaces for youth to thrive. Consider how you can support LGBTQI+ students in your school district.



ACTIVITY D

Journal on your own experience of feeling safe or unsafe based on your sexual orientation and gender identity.

- ✓ If you are getting married, can you easily find someone to officiate your wedding?
- ✓ Can you hold hands or kiss in public?
- ✓ Can you find clothes that match your gender identity and body type?
- ✓ Can you openly display photos or talk about your spouse at work?

Share your reflections and any resources that helps further the discussion on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#UWIEquityChallenge](#).

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