



DEVISING FREEDOM

Storytelling Workshop

Equipping trans and GNC youth
with the tools they need to make
their voices heard



THE CURRENT STATE OF TRANS YOUTH

 The New Republic


The Christian Right Wants to Force Teachers to Out Trans Kids

Under the guise of “parental rights,” figures like Sonja Shaw want to draft educators into their war against trans students.

 The Texas Tribune

Texas bill banning gender-affirming care for transgender kids is now law

Texas joins 17 other states restricting transgender minors from accessing puberty blockers and hormone therapies. Opposing legal groups have...

 Spectrum News

Families of trans youth consider leaving Ohio due to anti-LGBTQ+ legislation

In 2023, 85 anti-trans bills have already passed out of the nearly 600 proposed across the country, according to Trans Legislation Tracker.

 CNN


19 states have laws restricting gender-affirming care, some with the possibility of a felony charge

This year has been record shattering for anti-LGBTQ legislation, with particular scrutiny on gender-affirming health care access for...

 North Carolina Health News

Transgender youth in North Carolina dealing with medical “whiplash” of ban on gender-affirming care

Advocates say House Bill 808 is forcing delays in needed and desired health care and imposing burdens on those seeking care out of state.

 WWNO

'Kids will end their lives': Anti-trans legislation is impacting mental health in the Gulf South

As book bans and legislation pile up, a Louisiana trans teen describes the mental toll it's taking on him and highlights the importance of...

 AP News

Wisconsin Assembly approves transgender sports restrictions, gender-affirming surgery ban


MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Republican-controlled Wisconsin Assembly signed off Thursday on contentious legislation limiting transgender youth...

 CNN

Missouri governor signs gender-affirming care ban for minors and anti-trans sports bill


Missouri's Republican Gov. Mike Parson on Wednesday signed into law two bills targeting the rights of transgender people in the state,...

BUT WE ARE NOT ALONE. WE ARE FIGHTING BACK!

 Washington Senate Democrats

Legislation to protect trans youth seeking life-saving care signed into law - Sen. Marko Liias

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 9, 2023. OLYMPIA – Transgender youth who are not safe at home and seeking life-saving care can depend on Washington for safe...

 NBC News


New York governor signs 'safe haven' law for transgender youth

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a bill to protect access to transition-related medical care for transgender minors.

 ABC News

California passes slate of LGBTQ protections

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed a slate of legislation protecting and supporting the LGBTQ community.

 Louisiana Illuminator

Trans youth healthcare ban killed in Louisiana, giving LGBTQ+ community a rare win

A senate panel killed a proposed ban on gender affirming healthcare for trans youth giving a rare victory to LGBTQ+ activists.

 Louisiana Illuminator

Louisiana governor to veto bills targeting LGBTQ+ youth

Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, will veto three anti-LGBTQ+ bills passed by the Republican-dominated Louisiana Legislature.

 NPR

Trans teens' families ask Supreme Court to protect gender affirming care in Tennessee

Families of transgender youth in Tennessee are appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court to block a state law that bans gender affirming care.

WHY WE NEED STORIES FOR LIBERATION

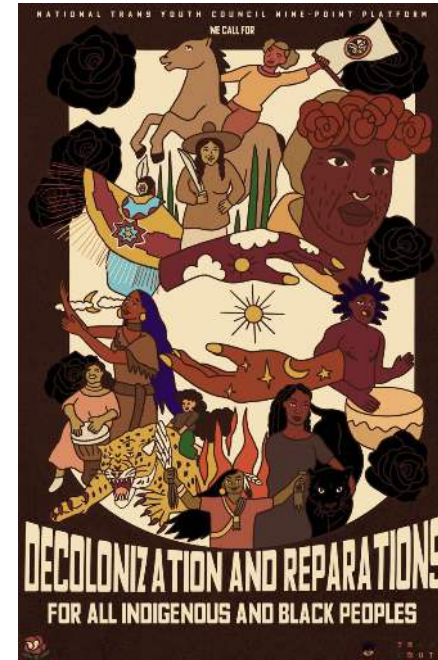
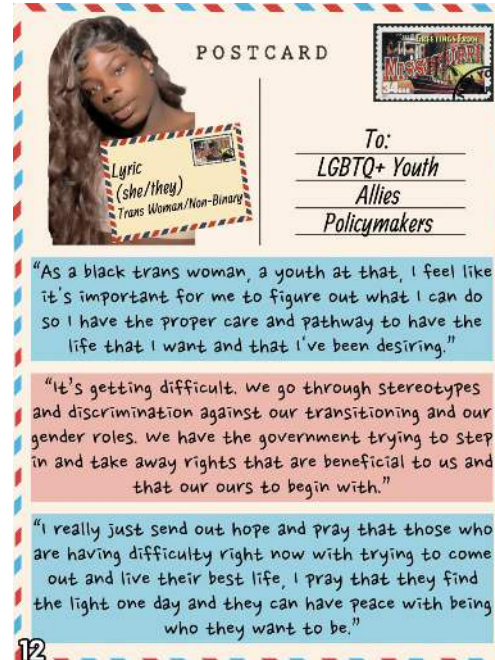
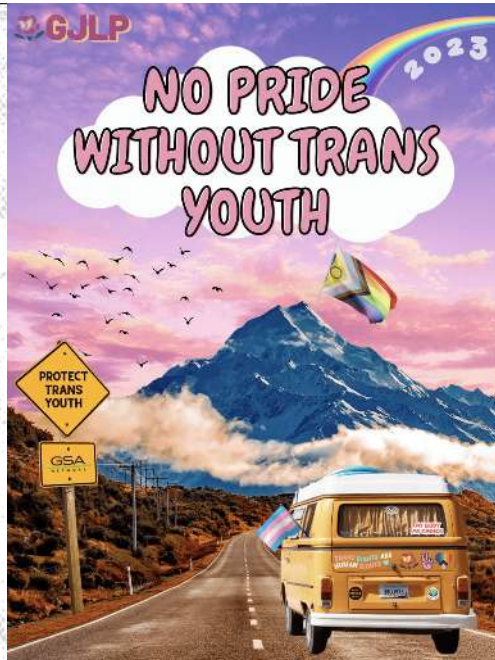
- 1) To share our truth and gain visibility
- 2) To challenge common assumptions and narratives
- 3) To build empathy and solidarity
- 4) To heal and grow from our own experiences
- 5) To create the future we deserve
- 6) To connect with others and gain support

WE NEED STORIES THAT:

- 1) Are created by and center the affected people
- 2) Are effective and authentic
- 3) Capture and keep attention
- 4) Call people to action

GJLP Storytelling Examples

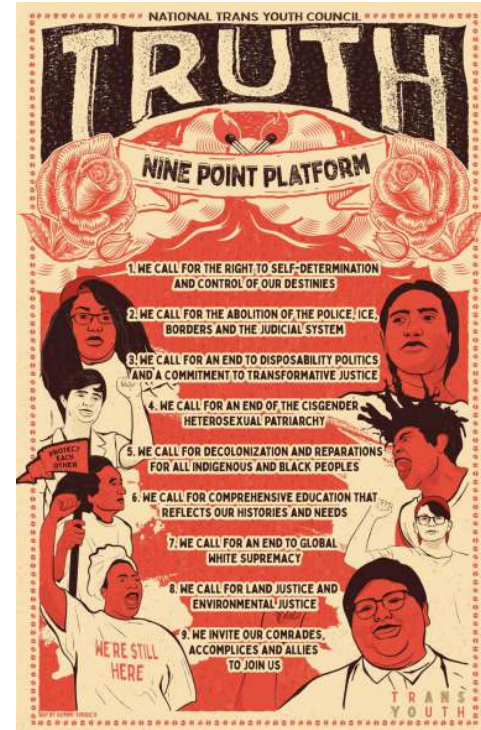
Projects by our councils have ranged from **open letters** to **social media campaigns** to **curriculum creation/sharing** to **direct support** of community!



GJLP Storytelling Examples

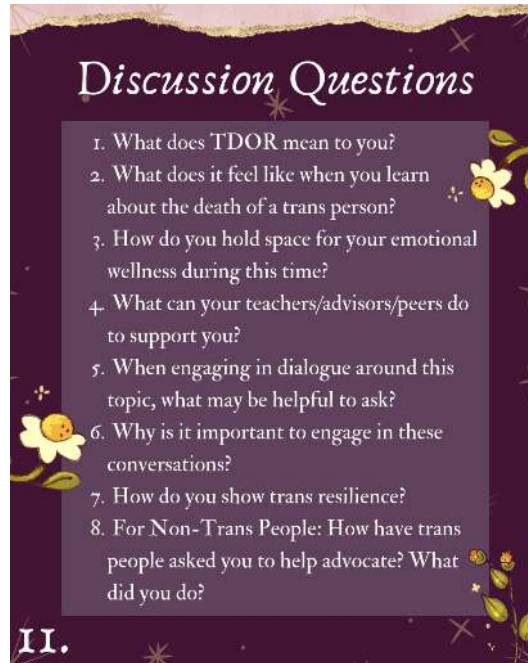
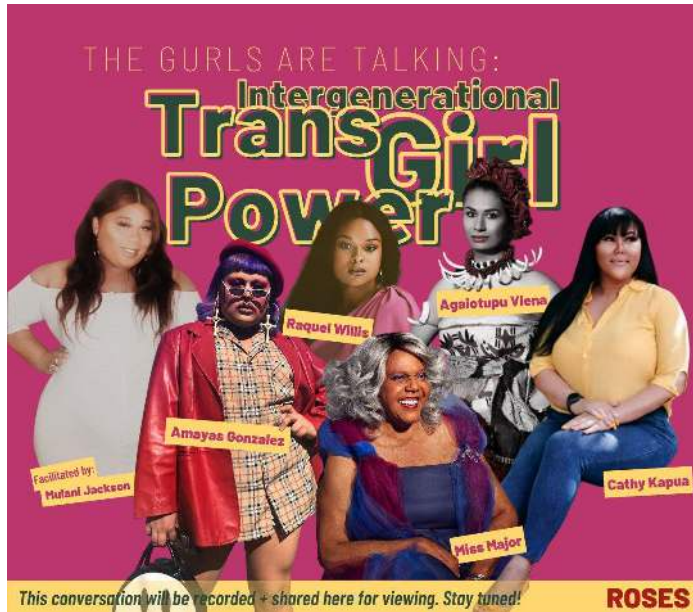
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Transgender Day of
Remembrance and Resilience



GJLP Storytelling Examples

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The Power in Youth Stories

Through youth storytelling, messages of empathy and education are authentic and effective in reaching large audiences...



INIPERANGELICA GIA LOVING

Identity

**Trans Youth on What They Wish
Lawmakers Behind Anti-Trans Bills Really
Understood**

Mostly, their humanity.

Amid a Global Crisis, Legislators Prioritize Targeting Trans Youth



Why is discrimination on anyone's agenda right now?

BY DEXTER KOMAKARUJ
MARCH 30 2020 5:43 PM EDT



US news

**Trans kids on the Republican bills targeting
them: 'I'm not a problem to society'**

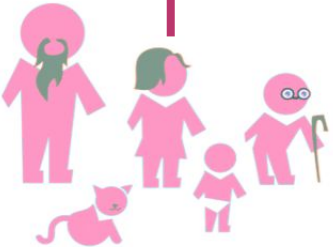
In states across the US, conservatives are pushing to ban gender-affirming healthcare and limit trans kids' access to sports teams. Children and their parents speak out

...with potential for both good and not-so-good reactions.

TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES: AM I READY TO SHARE MY STORY?

1 Who will be impacted when I tell my story?

2 Will anyone be outed?



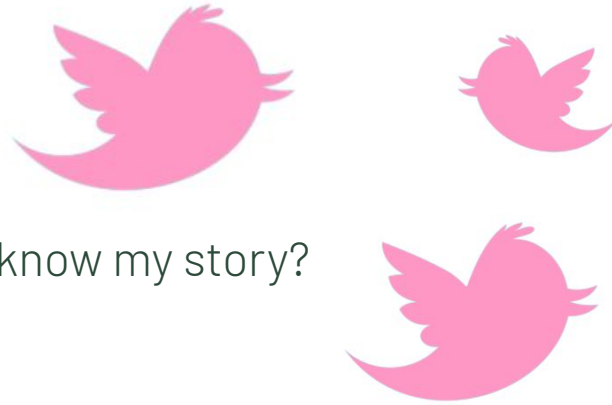
3 Are my closest friends and family ready?





4

Am I ready for the world to know who I am?



5

Is it cool if my classmates know my story?

6

What happens when people say mean things on Instagram, Twitter, and other social media?

7

Do I have someone to lean on? Is there an organization nearby that can support me?

"It was important for me to tell my story where I knew I would have support. I chose to tell my story at a public direct action on Valentine's Day because we had advertised the action as 'trans women need revolutionary love too,' so everyone there was supportive."

- **Reimi**, ze/hir, 14, MO

8

Do I have a say in what, how, and when my story is being shared?

"The more marginalized identities you have, the more you have to prepare yourself when speaking out for the true oppression of the world. Your soul has to be very strong to not take the oppression personally and to be able to see little progress for a lot of hard work as something good."

- **Zeam** Porter, 18, Minneapolis, MN



| BENEFITS | RISKS |
|---|---|
| ✔ Your story has the power to inspire people and engage them to take action. | ✔ Sharing your story can put you in a vulnerable position to be judged and treated unfairly. |
| ✔ Storytelling can be cathartic. It can be healing and empowering. | ✔ Once your story is out there, there is no way to take it back. The Internet reaches far and wide. |
| ✔ Sharing your story can help change people's behavior. | ✔ People who don't understand your gender identity might say mean things to and about you. |
| ✔ When we share our stories we move other people to be their most authentic selves. | ✔ If you conduct media interviews, you risk being asked tough questions that you may not be ready to answer. |
| ✔ Sharing your story can help people understand a new idea or concept. | ✔ If you are not careful, you may accidentally share private information about other people. |
| ✔ Under the right circumstances your story could help pass a piece of legislation that helps tens of thousands of people. | ✔ If your story goes viral, you may receive a lot of unwanted emails, mail, phone calls, requests on social media, or interview requests. |
| ✔ You might make new friends who have similar experiences or have new opportunities open up. | ✔ People at school or your place of worship might respond poorly to your story. |

Crafting Your Story

STORYTELLING WITH PURPOSE

Public storytelling is most effective when you start with a goal, and craft your story to meet that goal. Think through:

1. **Goal:** What do you hope sharing your story will achieve?
2. **Audience:** Who are the people you need to reach to meet that goal?
3. **Message:** What message do you want that audience to take away?
4. **Action:** Stories should always include a call to action. What action do you hope your audience will take after hearing your story?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

It's important to know where your audience is starting out before you can craft a message to reach them.

- **Non-trans audiences:** When most people hear about transgender issues, who's the first trans person they think of?

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- What **stereotypes** do people have about transgender youth?

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TIPS: TALKING ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRANSGENDER

No one else can tell you who you are. No matter how you define yourself, if it is true to you, then it is right.

It is not your job as a transgender or gender nonconforming (TGNC) person to educate others, and you do not need to change the way you describe yourself to make others comfortable.

If you are speaking out publicly with the goal of increasing public understanding and changing the way people think about being transgender, we have found the following tips and approaches to be helpful.

TIPS: TALKING ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRANSGENDER

Help people see past their assumptions

- Trans youth as part of community (family and chosen family, friends, school, etc)
- Trans youth are not just trans, but also are young people
- Understanding transition beyond [fill in the blank] medical step

TIPS: TALKING ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRANSGENDER



TIPS: TALKING ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRANSGENDER

Use simple language and personal experience to guide people through what being transgender means for you

“I’m a transgender girl. For me, that means that even though the doctor announced that I was a boy at birth, I do not feel like that fits me. When I think about my gender, I feel closer to womanhood and identifying as a girl feels authentic.”

“I’m nonbinary. For me, although my parents thought they had a girl, identifying as one didn’t feel totally right. While it’s been a journey figuring out what gender I am, I can at least say for now, I am certain I don’t fit the box everyone expects me to be in.”

HOW TO TALK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE GENDER NON-CONFORMING (GNC)

Juniperangelica Cordova, 25, Azusa, CA, she/her

“Explaining your gender to others can already be complicated, but when you’re gender non-conforming, it can be even more difficult. As a non-binary trans person, I have learned that it’s easiest to begin with the basics and explain that my gender does not match what I was assigned at birth. For example, I might start with a story about how I do not feel comfortable with saying I am a boy. Once that’s understood, I take it a step further and explain that while being a girl felt closer to who I am, it wasn’t 100% right either. My gender just doesn’t quite fit the stereotypes of what it means to be male or what it means to be female.”



EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING - CRAFT YOUR STORY

Once you've answered those questions, it is time to put the pieces of your story together in a simple, short, and memorable way. Every story should have an introduction, middle, and end. It sounds simple, but in everyday conversations we often wander to other topics or give more detail than we need in order to get our point across.

In addition to an introduction, middle, and end, effective stories have six important pieces.

1. A protagonist (that's you!)
2. An activating event
3. Obstacles
4. Goal
5. Transformation
6. Call to action



1. A PROTAGONIST

This is you!

When crafting your story tell the audience about yourself: who you are, what you're like, what your favorite hobbies are. This helps the person hearing the story relate to you. In many cases, you and the audience probably have something in common. Keep it simple and conversational.

Here are a few prompts you can use:

- My name is . . .
- I live with . . .
- I'm __ years old . . .
- I am a transgender student . . .
- My favorite sport is . . .
- In my spare time I like to . . .
- I have __ siblings . . .
- I love my job. I work at . . .



***Remember, you don't want to give away too much personal information like your address.**



2. A LIGHT BULB MOMENT

What is a moment that helped you understand or embrace your gender, or an event that pushed you to live as your authentic self?

3. OBSTACLES

What obstacles did you face or do you still face?
What has been a barrier in being able to live as your authentic self?



4. GOAL

What was/is your goal?



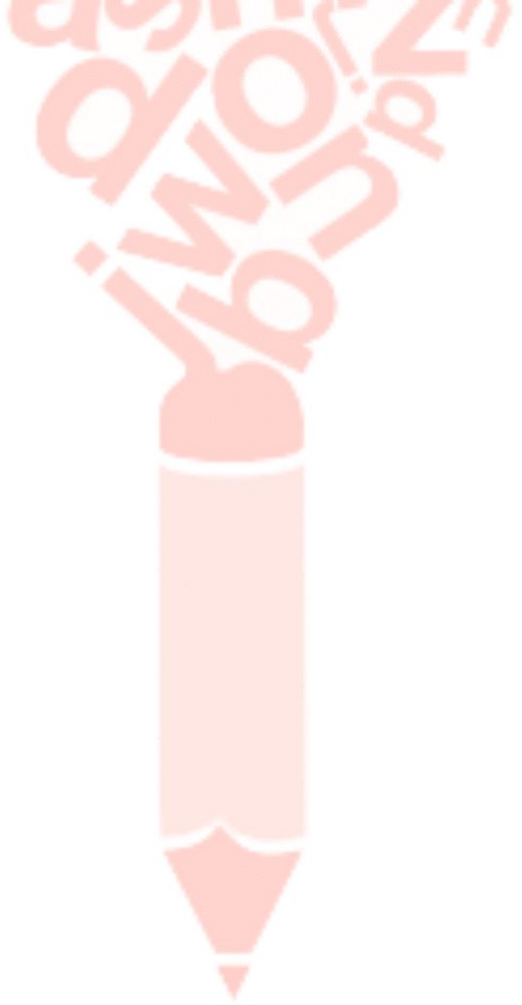
5. TRANSFORMATION

What is/was your transformation point? How did you get through your obstacles and to where you are today?



6. CALL TO ACTION

No story is complete without a call to action.
What is your call to action? What do you want people
to do after reading your story?



PRACTICE

Practice sharing out your story!

EMBRACE AND REPLACE...

| Say this... | Instead of... | Because research shows... |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Our genders/ Genders</p> | <p>Gender</p> | <p>Pluralizing genders enables greater agreement with our worldview and helps activate more expansive attitudes towards our genders and transgender people.</p> |
| <p>Respect each other for who we are, transgender or not</p> <p>Support all young people to be their authentic selves and pursue their dreams</p> <p>Each one of us should have the freedom to be ourselves, no matter the color of our skin, how we worship, or our genders</p> | <p>Protect vulnerable transgender kids</p> | <p>Promoting the creation of a positive good (the freedom of self expression) is more effective than appeals to ameliorate harm (protecting transgender young people from violence and discrimination). It generates support and trust from our base for transgender young people to know what is best for their own health and well-being.</p> |
| <p>Some people in power try to put us in boxes based on what we look like, where we're from, or our genders.</p> <p>Certain politicians push laws that restrict our freedoms based on the color of our skin, what's in our wallets, or because we are transgender.</p> | <p>Transgender kids face crushing bullying and discrimination, which threatens their physical and mental health.</p> | <p>The container/box metaphor is extremely effective across racial and ethnic groups for explaining what the villains are doing and how it harms all of us. It resonates with persuadables, builds empathy, and galvanizes our base to oppose those in power who seek to limit us based on who we are and control what transgender people can or cannot do.</p> <p>Focusing on the unique harms that transgender people face, on the other hand, further distances our audiences from the discussion, othering transgender people and at best eliciting pity. It also decreases our base and even progressive activists' trust in transgender young people to know what is best for their own health and well-being.</p> |

EMBRACE AND REPLACE...

| Say this... | Instead of... | Because research shows... |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Whether we are Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, transgender or not</p> <p>People of all races, backgrounds, and genders</p> <p>No matter what we look like, where we come from, or how we express our genders</p> | <p>All of us / Everyone/ We all</p> | <p>For a Race Class Gender Narrative to be effective, it's important to build connection by naming what we share across our differences.</p> <p>Explicitly naming specific races and genders can be more helpful than broader references to "races and genders," but both approaches perform well.</p> |
| <p>Certain politicians exploit divisions among us to try to get back into power.</p> <p>Some people in power fuel divisions based on race and exploit our lack of familiarity with transgender people so they can deny our communities the resources, jobs, and healthcare we all need.</p> <p>A handful of politicians stoke fear, trying to get us to turn against some group instead of joining together to demand what all of our families need.</p> | <p>Our opposition is racist/transphobic.</p> <p>Politicians divide us.</p> | <p>Framing the strategic racism of our opponents as fueling or exploiting existing divisions between us generates stronger agreement than directly blaming them for those divisions.</p> <p>This is an especially important distinction when talking about how our opposition stokes fear of transgender people. Our target audiences know that transphobia is widespread – and often themselves feel unsure about transgender people – so they do not buy statements attributing fear and division to certain politicians. By acknowledging our audience's own questions, concerns, and lack of familiarity with what it means to be transgender, though, we can remind them of their better values and intentions, and help them recognize how certain politicians take advantage of and manipulate their unease. It is helpful to echo and link how they "exploit" division across races and lack of familiarity with transgender people.</p> |

EMBRACE AND REPLACE...

| Say this... | Instead of... | Because research shows... |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Certain politicians...</p> <p>Some people in power...</p> <p>A powerful few...</p> | <p>Politicians</p> <p>The wealthy/powerful</p> | <p>To credibly name a villain, it's critical to make clear that you're implicating specific individuals (e.g., <i>certain</i> or <i>some</i> politicians) as opposed to vilifying whole categories of people.</p> |
| <p>[Certain politicians]... trying to get back into power/ get and hold onto power.</p> <p>.... who want to block us from joining together to demand what we all deserve.</p> <p>... who want to pick and choose who counts.</p> | <p>Transphobes/racists</p> | <p>In addition to naming our villains, we must expose the motivations behind their actions. "Getting back into power," "getting and holding onto power," exclusion and control broadly, and blocking us from demanding the resources we need all currently resonate with base and persuadable audiences in explaining why the opposition introduces these attacks on transgender people.</p> |

ACING A MEDIA INTERVIEW

Logistics

- Make sure you are on time.
- If you feel comfortable, introduce yourself to the reporter and other staff (there may be a camera person or a sound person there to help with the interview).
- Spit out any gum or food before the interview.
- For cameras:
 - Wear something solid in color. Don't wear anything that distracts from what you're saying like giant earrings or clothes that have lots of text.
 - You might get nervous but try not to fidget. Do your best to sit still.
 - Look directly at the reporter, never at the camera.

Video and Zoom Interviews

- Many of the same logistics apply to video/ zoom interviews.
- Test computer equipment (video and audio) before the actual interview. Use headphones and mics if available.
- Check that your background is clean, professional, and not distracting.
- Ensure that your environment is quiet and your wifi is working properly.
- Check the time zone for your call.
- Ask for the interview questions ahead of time.
- Always feel free to reach out to GJLP staff to ask questions and voice concerns

ACING A MEDIA INTERVIEW

- Guide the Interview
- Personalize and be yourself
- Use complete sentences
- Practice what you're going to say
- It's ok to say, "I don't know"



ACING A MEDIA INTERVIEW

Inappropriate or off-topic questions? Pivot!

- “Actually, what’s important here...”
- “What I really came to say...”
- “What it comes down to...”
- “The key thing to remember...”

Just because you’re asked a question, doesn’t mean you have to answer it!

ACING A MEDIA INTERVIEW

PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

You can't control what a reporter will ask in an interview, and sometimes questions will be ignorant, irrelevant, or even offensive. These practice questions will help you prepare for different situations. Remember, you can always refuse to answer a question that is inappropriate, or even explain to the reporter why it's the wrong question to ask – and what they should focus on instead.

1. When did you know?
2. If you're trans, why don't you always present as [feminine/masculine]?
3. What restroom do you use?
4. Have you been bullied?
5. How has this affected your relationship with your parents/family?
6. Where did your name come from?
7. Do you fear traveling alone/being in public as feminine/masculine?
8. Have you gotten the surgery?
9. How do you feel about *insert famous trans person name*? (for example, Caitlyn Jenner or Laverne Cox)?
10. What do you want other youth to know?
11. What is your response to the dozens of anti-trans bills sweeping across the country?

RESOURCES

Transgender Law Center

Media Contact: K Richardson
Email: info@transgenderlawcenter.org
Legal helpline: (415) 865-0176 x308
transgenderlawcenter.org

GSA Network

<http://www.gsanetwork.org/>
Email: info@gsanetwork.org

Gender Spectrum

<http://www.genderspectrum.org/>
Email: info@genderspectrum.org

GJLP

gjlp@gsanetwork.org
@ourtranstruth
ourtranstruth.org

National Center for Transgender Equality

<http://transequality.org/>
Email: ncte@transequality.org

Trevor Project

<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
Trevor Lifeline (crisis intervention): 866.488.7386
Email: info@thetrevorproject.org

GLAAD

<http://www.glaad.org/>