

ANSWERING THE QUESTION:  
“Can you help me with my tie?”

# SUPPORTING QUEER STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**SEATTLE PACIFIC**  
UNIVERSITY

NATIONALLY RANKED

SPU is the only private university in the Pacific Northwest to make *U.S. News & World Report's* 2018 “Best National Universities” list.

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In a post-colonial world, the land that we occupy is not our own. It is shared with others, and holds a rich and far too often forgotten history. “There have always been indigenous people where we call home, and there always will be” (Kanyon Sayers-Roods).

**Today I recognize that I am occupying  
Coast Salish, Stillaguamish, Duwamish, and  
Suquamish territories.**

Resource: <https://native-land.ca/>



# BY THE END OF THIS SESSION...

what will we NOT be able to do?  
what WILL we be able to do?

## AGREEMENTS

Intentions vs. Impact

Reaction vs. Response

Being called “out” vs. Being called “in”

Seeing things through a lens of “and” rather than “but”

## What does it mean to learn?

It is not just the acquisition of NEW skills or knowledge...

It is also the “unlearning” of past experiences



We must **ALL** be accountable to these agreements

# MY STORY



# MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Queer people just want to be **“normal”**  
**SAFETY & BELONGING**





## ASK YOURSELF

- ▼ Have you seen examples of anti-LGBTQ name-calling, bullying or harassment in your school?
- ▼ How are students affected by anti-LGBTQ bias at your school?
- ▼ Did you see anti-LGBTQ bias in school when you were a student? How did it affect you?



# ALLYSHIP

In a society that stigmatizes those who are not a member of **the majority** or dominant group, it is important for those that have **privilege** to act in allyship.

Acting in allyship is when an individual, sometimes a member of the majority or dominant group, **speaks out** and **acts in solidarity** with a person or group that is targeted.



Allyship works to **end oppression by supporting and advocating** for people who are stigmatized, discriminated against or treated unfairly. This can come in various forms such as interrupting individual moments of bias, to asking for systematic changes to eliminate unfairness and relieve injustices.

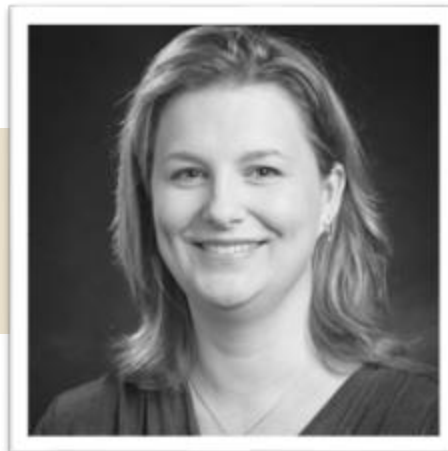
# INTERVIEWS

Dr. Brandon Beck



Trans/Queer  
Teacher Educator

Dr. Jennifer Irvin



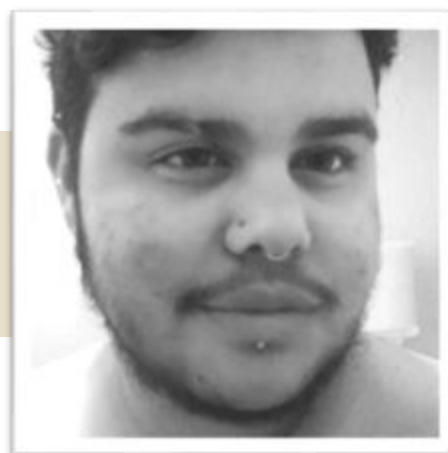
Parent of  
Queer Students

Shawn Lewis



Queer  
Educator

Kameron Rife



Trans/Queer  
Student





# QUESTION 1

Be prepared to respond to the following questions:

What did YOU hear?

(Perspective)

What do YOU think?

(Interpretation)



**What is something that you want to celebrate?**





GAY, LESBIAN & STRAIGHT  
EDUCATION NETWORK



A **safe space** is a supportive and affirming environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students. While we can never ensure that any space is going to be “safe” and affirming one hundred percent of the time, a safe space is a place, group, or community that is intentionally working to affirm LGBTQ people.



The **Safe Space Kit** is designed to help educators create a positive learning environment for LGBTQ students. We believe that one of the most effective ways for an educator to create a safe space is to be supportive and act in allyship to LGBTQ students.



# What's inside the Safe Space Kit?

▼ **Know the Issues** gives background information about LGBTQ students' experiences in school and anti-LGBTQ bias.

▼ **Support** describes specific actions you can take to be an effective advocate for LGBTQ students, some helpful “dos and don'ts” of adult allyship, and suggestions for interrupting anti-LGBTQ language.

▼ **Educate** discusses ways to bring LGBTQ visibility into your curriculum and inform other educators and school leaders about institutional supports for LGBTQ students, including policies for combating anti-LGBTQ bias and behavior.

▼ **Advocate** provides strategies improving school climate for LGBTQ students at your school.



# QUESTION 2

Be prepared to respond to the following questions:

What did YOU hear?

(Perspective)

What do YOU think?

(Interpretation)



**What is something that concerns you?**





Anti-LGBTQ bias and heteronormativity is all around us. Yet we tend to overlook the subtle biases — the anti-LGBTQ jokes, the exclusion of LGBTQ related-themes in curricula, even anti-LGBTQ name-calling. Subtle or not, bias has the power to hurt and isolate people. Your work as an educator committed to safe and supportive learning environments for **all students** includes recognizing and challenging your own anti-LGBTQ bias and dismantling any internalized homophobia or transphobia that you may hold.



# CHECK YOURSELF: UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN BELIEFS

Answer each question honestly, and consider how these will affect your work in advocating for LGBTQ students.

1. If someone were to come out to you as LGBTQ, what would your first thought be?
2. How would you feel if your child came out to you as LGBTQ? How would you feel if your mother, father or sibling came out to you as LGBTQ?
3. Would you go to a physician whom you thought was LGBTQ if they were of a different gender than you? What if they were the same gender as you?
4. Have you ever been to an LGBTQ social event, march or worship service? Why or why not?
5. Can you think of three historical figures who were lesbian, gay or bisexual?
6. Can you think of three historical figures who were trans or nonbinary?
7. Have you ever laughed at or made a joke at the expense of LGBTQ people?
8. Have you ever interrupted anti-LGBTQ teasing or harassment? Why or why not?
9. If you do not identify as LGBTQ, how would you feel if people thought you were LGBTQ?
10. If you do identify as LGBTQ, do you share this identity with your students? Their families? Colleagues? Administrators? Why or why not?



# CHECK YOURSELF: UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN BELIEFS

Recognizing your own relationship to the LGBTQ community and personal beliefs about LGBTQ identity is an important first step in **building a practice of allyship** for LGBTQ students.

Based on your responses to these questions, do you think you have internalized some of the anti-LGBTQ messages pervasive in our world?

How might your beliefs influence your actions as an educator of LGBTQ students?

The more aware we are of our own biases and their impact on our behavior, the easier it is to ensure that our personal beliefs don't undermine our efforts to support LGBTQ students.



# QUESTION 3

Be prepared to respond to the following questions:

What did YOU hear?

(Perspective)

What do YOU think?

(Interpretation)



**What advice do you have for teachers?**





Being LGBTQ is **not** a monolithic experience and neither are the needs to approach multiple forms of **oppression** within the community. Allyship consists of **challenging** the multiplicity of oppressive experiences, including racism, genderism, sexism, ableism, etc. that these students experience.

## LGBTQ-related terminology



<https://forms.gle/CArVuGsPfVahDyGL7>



# Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social emotional learning (SEL) is a process through which people build awareness and skills in managing emotions, setting goals, establishing relationships and making responsible decisions that support success in school and in life.

SEL is an intentional approach to building student assets and emphasizing development of the whole child. SEL supports educational equity and can function as a key protective factor for all students.

## Framework and guiding principles

1. SEL implementation starts with capacity building.
2. SEL requires collaboration between families, educators, community partners, and young people in its design and implementation.
3. Washington State SEL is shaped by a commitment to the following four guiding principles:
  - **Equity:** Each child receives what he or she needs to develop his or her full potential.
  - **Culturally responsive:** Culture is viewed as a resource for learning, not a barrier.
  - **Universal design:** Learning differences are planned for and accommodated.
  - **Trauma informed:** Knowledge of the effects of trauma is integrated into policy and practice.





## ^ What does Washington State require?

Beginning January 2020, the Washington State Legislature requires teacher and principal preparation programs to ensure candidates can recognize signs of emotional or behavioral distress in students and appropriately refer students for assistance and support. *RCW 28A.410.270, RCW 28A.410.273, Program Standards 2.C.vii, WAC 181-78A-232(3)(g)*

The guidance provided to candidates must include:

1. [Washington State social emotional learning standards and benchmarks](#) . These are student standards and include:
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-management
  - Self-efficacy
  - Social awareness
  - Social management
  - Social efficacy
2. Related competencies such as trauma-informed practices, consideration of adverse childhood experiences, mental health literacy, anti bullying strategies, and culturally sustaining practices.

# QUESTIONS

**It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.**

JAMES BALDWIN

**Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it.**

JAMES BALDWIN

**Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.**

JAMES BALDWIN

# COMMENTS



Please feel free to contact me at [ctfhanson@spu.edu](mailto:ctfhanson@spu.edu)