



LGBTQIA+

Awareness & Sensitivity Training

Understanding and Supporting the LGBTQ+
Community in Law Enforcement

DeKalb County Police Department
Training Division 2025



Terminal Performance Objective

The purpose of this course is to provide Dekalb County Police officers with the knowledge and skills to effectively interact with the LGBTQ+ community they serve as well as fellow officers who identify as LGBTQ+.

Enabling Objective

- Learn techniques to enhance understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences.
- Identify way to promote respectful interactions
- Identify ways to improve community relations
- Discuss ways to ensure equitable treatment
- Discuss how to reduce discrimination





What does LGBTQIA+ Stand For

- **L**esbian- A sexual orientation that describes a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.
- **G**ay- A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender (most commonly used to describe men).
- **B**isexual- A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity.
- **T**ransgender- Umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior differs from that typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
- **Q**ueer- An umbrella term used to describe people who think of their sexual orientation or gender identity as outside of societal norms.
- **I**ntersex- A term used for a variety of conditions where a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- **A**sexual- A person who shows little or no sexual attraction to others. It is not the same as celibacy.



History

1st Event

August 5, 1969

Atlanta PD raided Ansley Mall Mini Cinema for a violation of obscenity law as well as to identify homosexuals.

2nd Event

September 10, 2009

Atlanta PD raided Atlanta Eagle w/o a warrant and everyone was searched. The raid was ruled unconstitutional and settlement payment was \$1,025,000.

3rd Event

February 4, 2012

Brandon White was beaten by four men in Atlanta for his sexual orientation. In November 2023 White graduated from Chamblee PD academy and is now a police officer.

4th Event

June 23, 2020

House Bill 426 passed which provide stronger penalties for hate crimes targeted at victims or communities.

5th Event

October 30, 2023

A gender affirming medical clinic in Downtown Decatur was intentionally set on fire and is being investigated as a hate crime by the FBI.

6th Event

July 11, 2023

DeKalb's Board of Commissioners passed a non-discrimination ordinance.

Interesting facts

A list of interesting facts about LGBTQIA+ Pride Month.

- The LGBTQ+ rights movement in the US was kickstarted in 1969 with the Stonewall riots.
- In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders.
- President Obama announced the Stonewall Inn the first national monument to LGBTQ+ rights in 2016.





Legal Rights and Protections

Bias Crime/Hate Crime- A criminal offense(s) motivated in part or singularly by personal prejudice against others because of diversity: race, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity/national origin, age or disability.

FEDERAL

On October 28, 2009, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama. It expanded the 1969 U.S. federal hate crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

STATE

On June 26, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp signed into law additional criminal sentencing guideline to anyone who commits a hate crime based on race, sex, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, mental disability or physical disability.

LOCAL

On July 11, 2023, DeKalb County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted a nondiscrimination ordinance. The ordinance bars discrimination in public accommodations and against county employees. Violators can face penalties from a fine to loss of alcohol or business license.

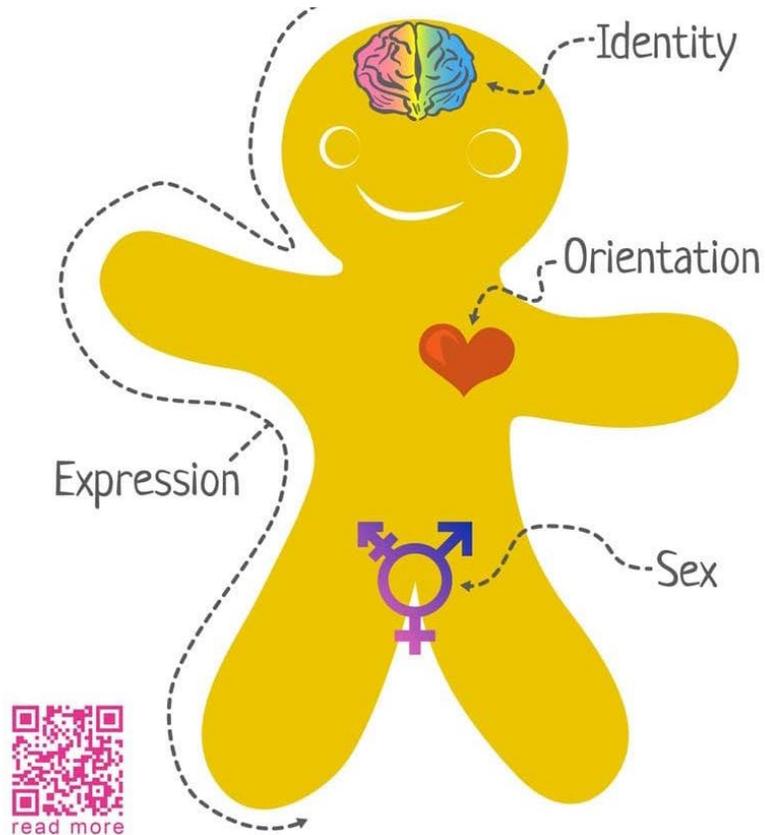




Genderbread Person



Genderbread Person



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

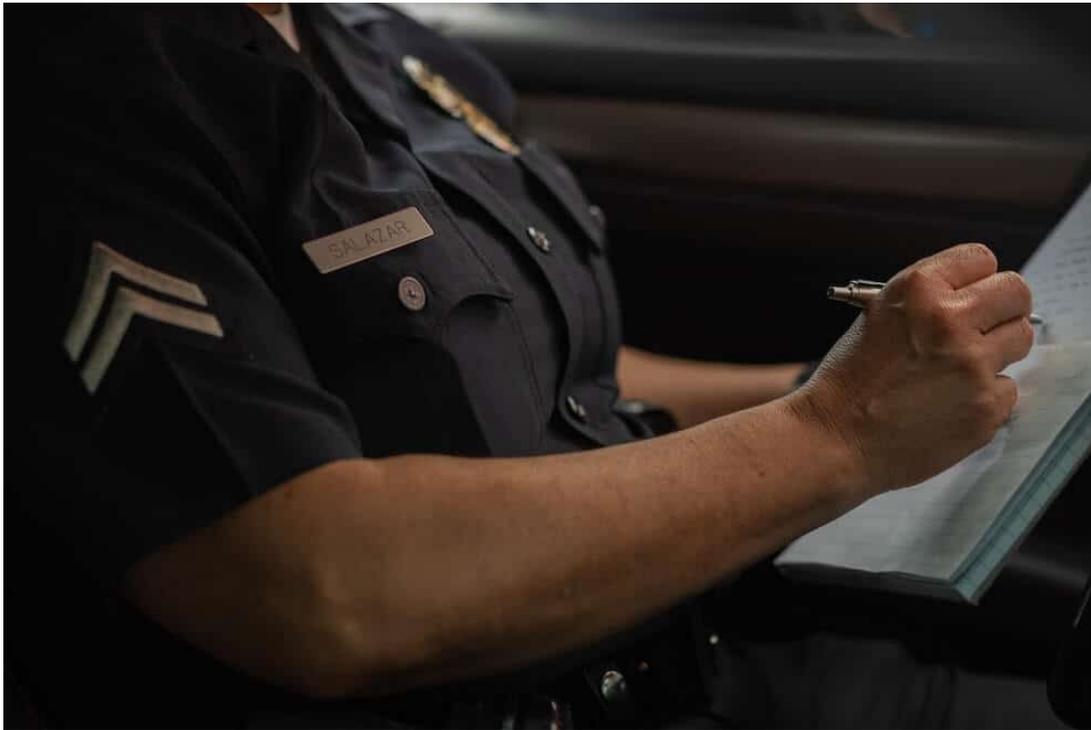


Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

What to Do on Scene



- Secure the scene.
- Stabilize the victim(s) and request EMS if needed.
- Identify all victims, witnesses, and suspect(s).
- Preserve the crime scene and physical evidence such as hate literature, spray paint cans, or symbolic objects used by hate groups.
- Identify evidence on the victim.
- Conduct preliminary investigation on the incident.
- Arrest the suspect(s) if they're still on scene.
- Notify supervisor and the appropriate investigative unit of the incident.
- Have Body Worn camera on and take pictures of physical evidence and injuries on the victim.



Potential Bias Indicators of a Hate Crime

- What were the suspects comments, gesture or written statements, including graffiti or symbols.
- Are there any differences between the victim or suspects? Whether actual or perceived by the suspect.
- Are there any similar incidents at the same location or nearby to determined a pattern.
- Was the victim engaging in activities promoting their group or community?
- Was the incident on a certain holiday or a day of significance.
- Is the suspect involved in an organized hate group.
- Absence of additional motives such as economic gain or petty theft.

Note: The victim should not be asked directly if they believe they were a victim of a hate crime. More appropriately ask if they have any idea why they might have been victimized.



Effective Ways to Support Victims

- Remain calm and professional.
- Reassure the victim they are not to blame for the incident.
- Encourage them to recall to the best of their ability exactly what happened and exact words of the suspect. If the victim is too distraught let them defer answering questions.
- Provide them with information on how to enhance their safety.
- Reassure the victim all efforts will be made to protect their anonymity during the investigation.
- Tell the victim the sequence process of the investigation so they know what to expect next.



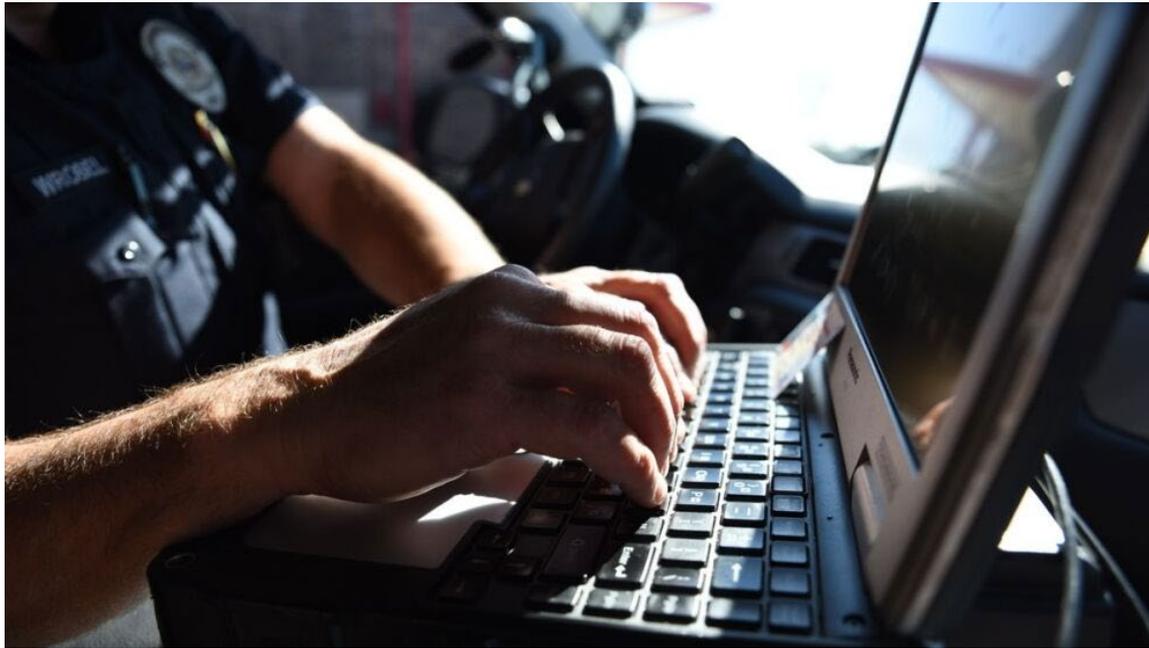
Ineffective Ways to Support Victims

- Do not be abrupt, rush, or unprofessional.
- Do not tell the victim you know how they feel.
- Do not criticize the victim's behavior or actions.
- Do not make assumptions about the victim, ask.
- Do not allow personal biases or beliefs affect the objectivity.
- Do not use offensive terminology.





Report Writing/ Citation Issued



- When issuing a citation use the person's name on the government issued ID/DL.
- For report writing purposes in the victim/suspect information box use the name on the government issued ID/DL.
- For the sex section of GEARS and RMS explain to the victim/suspect/witness/complainant that there are two options for the section and which gender, male or female, would they like to use.
- For the body of the report state the victim/suspect government's name is Joe Doe but prefers to be known as Jane Davies in the narrative.





Common Challenges

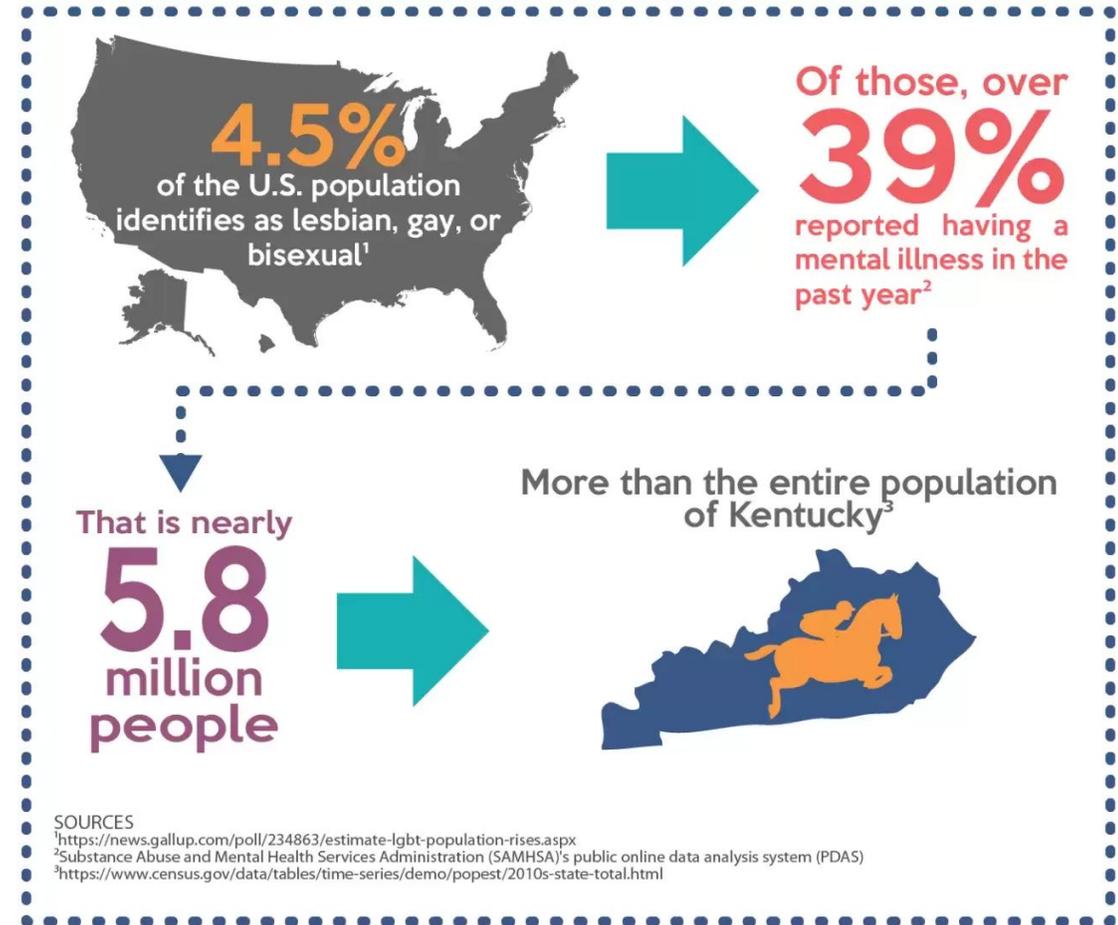
- **Discrimination:** LGBT face discrimination in many areas of life from housing, employment, healthcare, and retirement. In 2022 nearly 3 in 10 LGBTQ+ adults reported housing discrimination or harassment by being discouraged from purchasing a home, being denied access to a shelter or experiencing harassment from roommates or neighbors. In 2022 half of LGBTQ+ adults reported experiencing workplace discrimination or harassment. Some were denied a promotion or fired while others had their work hours cut. Few even reported being verbally, physically or sexual harassed.

This may be why officers experience apprehension or victims who are not as forthcoming.



Common Challenges (cont.)

- **Health Disparities:** The United States is facing a mental health crisis especially since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The LGBTQ+ community are more than twice as likely to experience a mental health condition in their lifetime, according to the American Psychiatric Association. Some causes of poor mental health stem from social stigma and discrimination stress. This stress can even come from medical professionals which makes it hard to seek medical treatments and leads to social determinant of health.





Common Challenges (cont.)

- **Violence:** Domestic violence happens to all races, class and age but disproportionately affects LGBTQ+ communities. They often have less support like shelters or are afraid to turn to law enforcement for assistance. In October 2023 the FBI released its annual crime report for 2022 and it showed LGBTQ+ hate crimes were up 13.8% based on sexual orientation and up 32.9% based on gender identity. In August 2024 DeKalb County had a murder suicide in the LGBTQ+ community.

"We also know that this data is incomplete, that too many cities and states are reporting incomplete data, or even no data at all, on hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community. If we're going to bring a stop to that violence, we need a full accounting of just how many hate crimes are taking place – and that requires every jurisdiction stepping up."

-Human Rights Campaign (HRC) President Kelley Robinson

Role of Law Enforcement

Importance:

- Research data found that bias-motivated offenses are often undetected and underreported compared to other crimes.
- With an increase in reporting, more cases will be investigated, and more violators will be prosecuted increasing crime prevention and building police legitimacy.





Creating Positive Interactions

Positive interactions: By adopting policies that prohibit hateful language and searches that determine gender, law enforcement departments can reduce negative encounters with the LGBTQ+ community. Recruiting from the community could better help with police legitimacy and swiftly respond to bias from fellow officers. Learning gender identifications language such as appropriate pronoun usage can lead to positive interactions, reducing use of force and ultimately officer safety.

Why Gender Pronouns Matter



- **Respect-** Using the right pronouns is a way to show respect for someone's gender identity.
- **Inclusion-** Using the right pronouns helps create spaces that are inclusive for people of all genders.
- **Safety-** Using the right pronouns can help create safe spaces for people who are trans or gender diverse.
- **Communication-** Using the right pronouns is a clear way to communicate how someone wants to be addressed.



10 Things You Are Saying When You Ignore Someone's Gender Pronouns

"I know you better than yourself"

"I would rather hurt you repeatedly than change the way I speak about you"

"Your sense of safety is not important to me"

"Your identity isn't real and shouldn't be acknowledged"

"I want to teach everyone around me to disrespect you"

"Offending you is fine if it makes me feel more comfortable"

"I can hear you talking, but I'm not really listening"

"Being who you truly are is an inconvenience to me"

"I would prefer it if you stopped being honest to me"

"I am not an ally, friend, or someone you can trust"





Scenario: Assault

Scenario: You and a territory unit were dispatched to an assault call of a transgender woman who was the victim. Your territory partner asks for the victim's ID and refers to the victim as sir, accentuating "sir." The victim is wearing a blouse and leggings clearly presenting as a woman.

**Is what your territory partner did professional or respectful?
Why or why not?**

How would you talk to your partner about their actions?





Scenario: Domestic

You and your territory partner respond to a dispute call between two females at an apartment complex. You and your secondary officer arrive on scene and observe two females visibly upset at one another. Female #1, Hannah, is upset that female #2, Brittany, spent too much money at the bar the previous night and now rent is short. Brittany stated that Hannah slapped her in her face, so she pushed Hannah into the wall. There are no visible marks on either Hannah or Brittany.

What observations and/or questions should be asked to determine if this is a domestic violence situation?

Is this a domestic situation?

How would you handle this call?





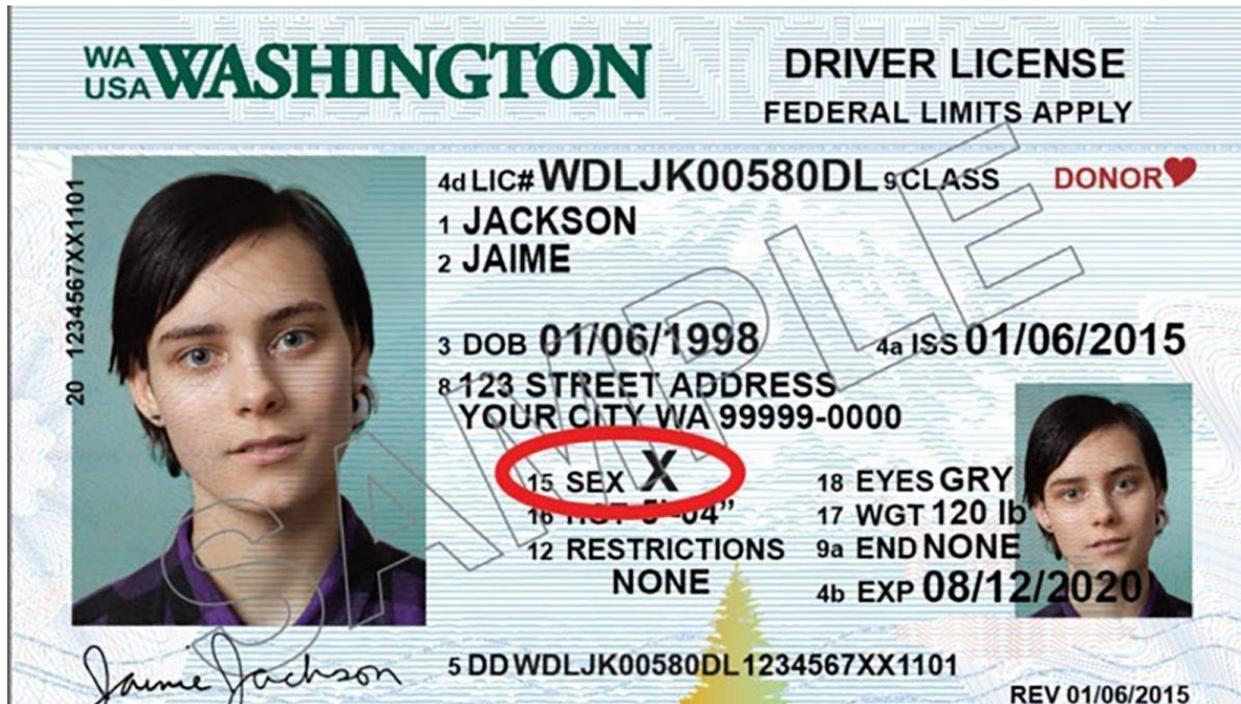
Scenario: Traffic stop

Scenario: You pull over a vehicle for a stop sign violation. You approach the vehicle, identify who you are, the reason for the stop and ask for their license. The drivers license shows a male name, the sex as "M," and a picture of a man but the person you're speaking with appears to be a woman. What questions are going through your mind? Is this person disguised to hide a crime? Is this the sister of the male on the license? Is this someone else's drivers license?

Would you address the person as ma'am or sir? Or rely on the driver's license information or the person's appearance?



"X" Gender Marker on Driver's License



- All 50 States allow transgender individual to change their gender on the driver's license, but requirements vary by state.
- Georgia requires proof of surgery, court order or altered birth certificate to change gender marker on driver's license.



How to Search

DKPD Policy 4-4.10 D Prisoner Searches:

In situations where an arrestee's gender, gender identity, or gender expression is uncertain to the arresting officer, the arrestee shall be asked their preference with regard to the gender of the officer searching the arrestee. If the officer of the preferred gender is not available, this will be explained, and the search can be conducted by the arresting officer. Good judgment should be exercised in searching the arrestee to avoid claims of impropriety.

DKPD Policy 4-4.11 Guidelines for Prisoner Searches:

Each officer that takes custody of a prisoner is required to complete a prisoner search which is as thorough as circumstances permit. It is the policy of the Police Department that all prisoner searches and prisoner restraining will be accomplished as humanely as possible with the safety of the prisoner, the public and the police officer under consideration at all times.

ALL ARRESTEE'S WILL BE SEARCHED

How to Transport

DKPD Policy 4-4.8:

Prior to leaving the location at which the prisoner was taken into custody, the transporting officer will give the mileage shown on the transport vehicle odometer. Upon arrival at the final destination, the officer will give the ending mileage. In each instance, Communications will respond with a reading of the time. If Communications does not respond with the time, the officer will restate the transport information and will request a time reading from Communications.





Prior to Transport

Important: Prior to transport respectfully ask the arrestee if they have male or female genitalia. This question **MUST** be asked so the arrestee is taken to the appropriate entrance at the jail. The transporting officer will give the mileage shown on the transport vehicle odometer for ALL arrestees and the gender based on their current sex genitalia.

Arriving at DeKalb County Jail



- If the arrestee has had a sex change they will enter the jail on the side they physically changed too.

Example: If a male has had a sex change to reflect female genitalia they will enter on the female side. If a female has had a sex change to reflect male genitalia they will enter on the male side.

- If the arrestee identifies as the opposite sex but still has their original birth anatomy they will enter on the side that reflects their birth sex.

Example: A female's gender expression is male and they identify as male but still have female anatomy they will enter on the female side.

Supporting LGBTQ+ Coworkers



Don't say "don't be a pussy" because it implies that a certain body feature is indicative of being a coward.



Don't say "bitch" because it insists that femininity is inherently negative.



Don't say "tranny" because it's insulting to trans & genderqueer people who don't fit labels.



Don't say "that's so gay" because the words gay and stupid are not interchangeable.

Terms & Words NOT to Use

“He-she”

“She-male”

“Tranny, Fag, Faggot, Dyke, Queer—sometimes offensive slang terms are used against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. While some of these words have been reclaimed and used by some members of the LGBT communities, they can be considered offensive terms. These terms would not be considered professional speech and should not be used while representing the department.”

Never ask about surgeries.

Never ask “what is your real name?”





Enabling Objective

- To enhance understanding of LGBTQIA+ identities and experiences
- Promote respectful interactions
- Improve community relations
- Ensure equitable treatment
- Reduce discrimination



Questions?





"We may not be responsible for it (history), but we are responsible to it."
-Chief Scott Thomson



Resources

- **National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network:** Healing justice org committed to transforming mental health for queer & trans people of color (Stoc).
- **Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN):** National network of educators, students, and local chapters working to give students a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ+ inclusive education.
- **Human Rights Campaign:** Is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve LGBTQ+ equality. The website has a wealth of information and resources for the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.
- **Georgia Equality, Inc:** Works year-round to pass pro-equality legislation and elect fair-minded elected officials. Through the **Equality Foundation of Georgia**, they conduct voter registration and educational activities, provide information to decision makers, and work to organize and mobilize LGBTQ residents and allies to advance equality in urban, suburban, and rural communities across the state.