

Inclusion of Gender Minorities in Nuclear

Auden S. Oliveri

they/them

Reed Research Reactor

B.A. Chemistry, Reed College

Reed Research Reactor, Reed College

Portland, OR

For the National Organization of Test, Research, and Training Reactors

June 22, 2023



**REED
COLLEGE**

Outline

- I. Overview
- II. First-Hand Experiences and Interviews
- III. Breakout Groups
- IV. Debrief
- V. Q&A

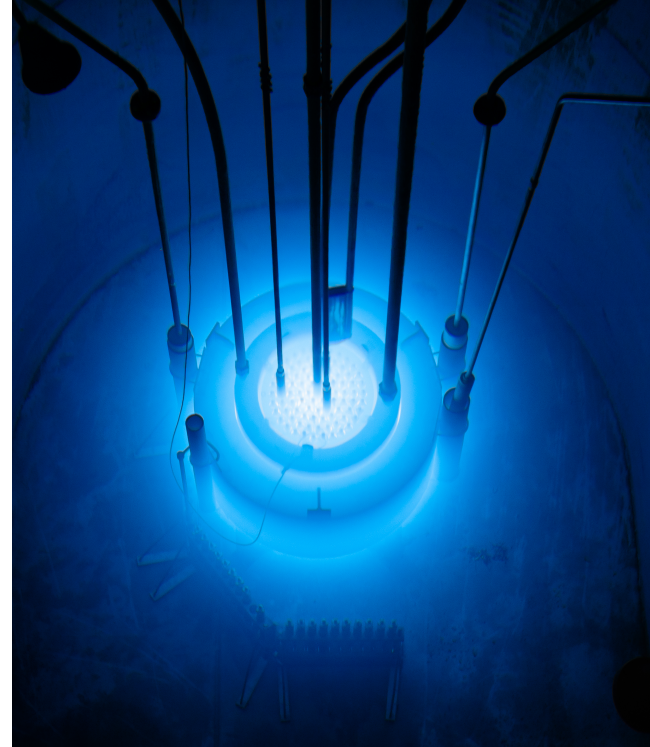


Fig. 1

Picture of Cerenkov Radiation of the Reed Research Reactor

I. Overview

Before we begin, *let's discuss group expectations*

Conversations about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are challenging. I encourage you to be brave and lean into some of the discomfort.

I ask that you recognize your own privilege and biases as you enter this presentation.

I ask that you enter this conversation ready to listen. I am not here to fix everything all at once. I just want to share my experience and the experiences of others.

There will be breakout groups that will be able to facilitate discussions about these topics. Some people may choose to share very personal experiences regarding DEI. *“What is said here stays here and what is learned here leaves here”* (Safe Zone Project, 2023)

The goal of this presentation is open the conversation in the RTR community about DEI, specifically about inclusion of Gender Minorities

What is DEI?

- DEI stands for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- In relation to gender:
 - “Gender is perhaps the dimension of diversity that has changed the most over time and continues to evolve as our understanding of social constructs expands.” (AAUW 2020)

- *Diversity* includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another.
- *Equity* is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.
- *Inclusion* is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.

Credit: Independent Sector (2016)

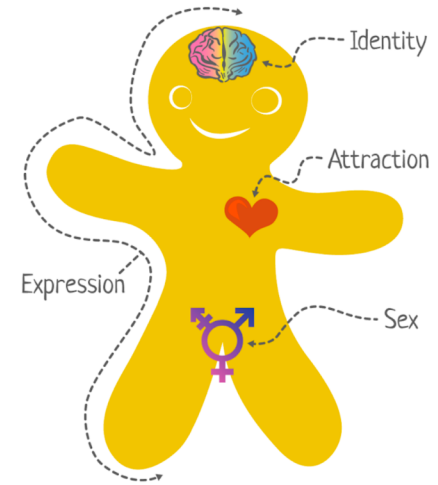
INPO Healthy Nuclear Safety Culture

- One of the key parts of Safety Culture is a respectful work environment
 - Trust and respect permeate the organization
 - Respect is evident
 - Opinions are valued
 - High Level of Trust
 - Conflict Resolutions

Key Terms

- **Gender Identity:** the internal perception of one's gender, and how they label themselves, based on how much they align or don't align with what they understand their options for gender to be.
- **Sex/ Biological Sex:** a medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex.
- **Gender Expression:** the external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanor, social behavior, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity.
- **Cisgender:** a gender description for when someone's sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man).
- **Cisnormativity:** the assumption, in individuals and in institutions, that everyone is cisgender.
- **Transgender:** an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man)

The Genderbread Person v4 by its pronounced METROsexual.com



Pronouns and Uses

- “Pronouns are basically how we identify ourselves apart from our name. It's how someone refers to you in conversation.”
(Mary Emily O’Hara)
- Pronouns do not always match people’s gender presentation, or gender identity
- Practice makes improvement
 - It’s okay to make mistakes. Learn from them and improve in the future

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Examples
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is studying. I studied with her. The book is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is studying. I studied with him. The book is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	They are studying. I studied with them. The book is theirs.
Name	Name	Name's	Name's self	Alex is studying. I studied with Alex. The book is Alex's.

Personal Experiences

- 4 people were interviewed
- All personal information was wiped to ensure protection and privacy

- **My experience**
Nonbinary, they/them pronouns

- **Person A**
Cisgender woman, she/her pronouns

- **Person B**
Cisgender woman, she/her pronouns

- **Person C**
Transgender Woman, she/they pronouns

- **Person D**
Nonbinary, they/them pronouns

Key Questions Asked and Takeaways

- “Since you’ve entered the nuclear field, do you feel as though you’ve experienced gender discrimination?”
 - Many of them have, or if they haven’t personally experienced it, they see it all the time
 - Little to no attempts to keep anonymity when complaints are filed

A safety-conscious work environment (SCWE) is maintained where personnel feel free to raise safety concerns without fear of retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination. (INPO 12-012 RC)

- Micro-aggressions
- “What do you feel has been done right in the community in regards to gender equality?”
 - Having so many student operators allows the younger generation to have a voice
 - Healthy Nuclear Safety Culture
 - A lot of change on the individual level is happening

Key Questions Asked and Takeaways

- “What do you think we as a community could do better on?”
 - Not being complacent- “we’re no longer in an era of don’t ask don’t tell”
 - Updating documentation and procedures, removing the small barriers (having a gender neutral bathroom)
 - Being more open to change
 - More than recognition is needed now
- “What are some things you do at your facility to ensure that gender minorities feel welcome?”
 - Correcting coworkers on pronouns
 - Cultivating an environment where teasing or bullying is not tolerated
 - Changing to preferred names on as much paperwork as possible, sharing preferred names with government agencies (such as NRC examiners) so the staff member can be referred to in the way they want
 - Anti Bias Training, being accommodating of needs

What is some advice you'd give to a young gender minority in nuclear?

Remember why you love what you're doing, and your imposter syndrome is lying to you

Stand up for yourself, make sure your voice gets heard

You are not alone, there are others who feel the same way as you

You do have a place in this community

Break-Out Groups

(15 mins, switch groups, 15 mins)

Guidelines for the Breakout Groups

- **Respect Others:** You will hear ideas that may be new or different for you, and opinions with which you may disagree. As you participate and interact, try to take in new information without judgment and to keep an open mind. Make sure that your words and body language reflect a respectful attitude toward others. Learn by listening to others.
- **Speak From the “I”:** Speak from your own personal experiences and do not judge the thoughts or experiences of others. Use I-statements such as “I feel...” or “In my experience...” Avoid “You should” statements and generalizations of any kind.
- **Ask Questions:** Much of the information we will cover will be new to many of you. Please feel free to ask any questions that come up for you without fear that they are too “silly” or “stupid.” Make sure to phrase all questions in respectful and value-neutral ways.
- **Respect Confidentiality:** Please make sure that everything said in the room stays in the room. When sharing personal anecdotes, make sure to avoid using the real names of other people.
- **Share “Air Time”:** While you are encouraged to express your ideas and opinions, please do not monopolize the group’s time. Help create a safe space in which everyone can speak. No one, however, is obligated to speak. “Passing” is okay.

Breakout Group Questions (#1)

- You've noticed a fellow staff member making comments that are subtly homophobic and transphobic, which are making you and others uncomfortable. You're unsure if this person realizes what they are saying is problematic or not. What might you do?
- A staff member shares at a staff meeting that they are trans and would like everyone to use a new name and the pronouns "they/them/theirs," while everyone at the staff meeting is very positive and affirming in the moment, afterward there is a lot of confusion and hesitancy about how to proceed. People aren't sure how to let others know, what to do when they mess up pronouns/names, what other types of support this person may want/need. How might you proceed?

Breakout Group Questions (#2)

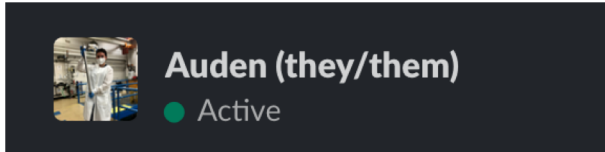
- What is your definition of DEI? What does it mean to you?
- Throughout your life, do you feel that you've experienced discrimination for any part of your identity? How have you dealt with that experience?
- Why should the Research Reactor community care about DEI?
- What is one thing you can do at your facility to promote gender inclusivity?

Final Thoughts

Small Ways to be Inclusive

Amber S. Johnson (she/her/hers)
Director, Radiation Facilities
Department of Materials Science and Engineering
University of Maryland A. James Clark School of Engineering
301.405.7756 | 301.500.9468 (Cell)
radiation.umd.edu

THE WORLD GOES TO MARYLAND



[This google form](#) is for personal use only. If you believe someone else's name is listed incorrectly, please contact them so they can fill out this form themselves (if they are ok with doing so). We can change your name on PCNs, printed requal lists, website staff lists, and other internal/posted lists. Please come talk to the Director/ROM if you have any questions.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the people who shared their stories with me for this presentation

Thank you to Amber Johnson for helping put together this project and supporting it along the way.

Thank you to all the older people in my life who identify as gender minorities, for showing me that I do have a place in this community.

Thank you to Toria Ellis and Jerry Newhouse, for always having my back, and for being two of my biggest cheerleaders.

Questions?