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**INTERFAITH ALLIANCE
OF IOWA**
PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM

“LGBTQ Iowans have much to celebrate this Pride Month. Over the past 8 years, we’ve seen society move in a more inclusive direction that many of us could not have dared to hope for when we were growing up. Because of the United States Supreme Court Ruling on Marriage Equality, LGBTQ Iowans (whose marriages have been recognized in Iowa since 2009) are protected in all 50 states of the Union. LGBTQ people who wish to serve in the armed forces, moved by patriotism and knowing that they may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice, now serve openly in the armed forces. Many Iowa Schools host gay-straight alliance groups to support LGBTQ students, and most major employers do, too. Not only that, but Iowa law has protected citizens from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity for 10 years. Still, many challenges remain. Many states allow employment and housing discrimination based on a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity, and Congress has failed to pass the Federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Abusive, anti-gay “conversion therapy” which has been denounced by the American Medical Association, is legal in Iowa. Transgender Americans are murdered at an alarming rate: The Advocate counts 12 transgender women (that we know of) who have been murdered in 2017. All of them are women of color. Here in Iowa, Burlington gender-fluid/transgender teen, Kedarie/Kandicee Johnson (the teen used two names) was shot and left in an alley. As we celebrate Pride, we should revel in the progress of the past 8 years, with the full realization that organized, powerful forces seek to turn back the clock. These forces are evident in President Trump’s refusal to recognize Pride Month, a conspicuous departure from the policy of the past 8 years. In another move towards erasing LGBTQ Americans, the U.S. Census Bureau will not collect information about sexual orientation or gender identity on the 2020 census. Now, more than ever, we must be steadfast and defiant in visibly celebrating our lives and claiming our rights as citizens.”

Rep. Liz Bennett, State Representative, Assistant Democratic Leader, First Openly-LGBTQ Woman to Serve in the Iowa Legislature



ABOUT THE IOWA LGBTQ MEDIA GUIDE

During the celebration of LGBTQ Pride Month in June, and all year long, it is crucial to have appropriate representation of the LGBTQ community in the media. The Iowa LGBTQ Media Guide has been compiled as a resource for local press and community leaders, using local and national expertise. This guide is meant to provide a foundation of understanding, as well as a starting point for contacts in the LGBTQ community as well as elected officials. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive glossary of language used within the LGBTQ community, nor is it a prescriptive guide for LGBTQ people.



OVERVIEW: LGBTQ IN IOWA

[Source: Movement Advancement Project]

Total Iowa Population: 3,134,963

Total Adult Population: 2,403,962

Total LGBTQ Population: 76,927

LGBTQ Percentage of Adult Population: 3.2%

Percentage of LGBTQ Population Raising Children: 28%

Beyond Varum: Iowa's mixed picture on LGBTQ rights

[Source: Movement Advancement Project]

Iowa has a rich, progressive history when it comes to equality and civil rights. From the first Supreme Court decision in re: Ralph which abolished slavery in our state, to Varum v. Brien affirming the freedom to marry, Iowans are proud of being ahead of the curve when it comes to equality. But those highlights in our history don't tell the whole story about where we are as a state when it comes to LGBTQ rights, and we have much work ahead in Iowa to ensure fairness and equality for all our residents.

Marriage and Relationship Recognition: While Iowa ensures the freedom to marry and medical decision-making authority for same-sex couples, the state lacks a family leave law, which would ensure that LGBTQ people can take time off of work to care for their families.

Adoption and Parenting Laws: Iowa law allows statewide access to adopt for same-sex parents, but lacks non-discrimination protections for adoption and foster care by LGBTQ parents.

Non-Discrimination Laws: Iowa has non-discrimination laws that protect LGBTQ people in housing, employment, public accommodations, credit and lending, and for state employees.

LGBTQ Youth Laws and Policies: Non-discrimination and anti-bullying laws exist in Iowa, but there is no law prohibiting the harmful and dangerous practice of so-called "conversion therapy."

Health and Safety Policies: Iowa law covers hate crimes based on sexual orientation, but does not cover gender identity. In March of 2016, the Iowa Senate passed legislation that would add gender identity to Iowa's hate crime law, but the bill was not allowed a vote in the House of Representatives.



Ability for Transgender People to Correct Name and Gender on Identity Documents: Iowa law restricts the ability of transgender persons to correct their name and gender on official identity documents, requiring proof of sex reassignment surgery, court order, and/or amended birth certificate in order to change gender marker to correct a driver's license, and proof of sex reassignment surgery to correct a birth certificate

Best practices for LGBTQ coverage

[Adapted from the GLAAD media reference guide]

Identify Iowans accurately. If someone clearly states that they identify as bisexual, do not identify them as gay, lesbian, or straight instead. Simply because a person is currently in a relationship with someone of the same sex, that does not negate the person's bisexual orientation. Similarly, if a person is in what appears to be a heterosexual relationship, that also does not negate the person's bisexual orientation. Ask the person included in your press coverage how they identify before making that assumption.

Always use a transgender person's chosen name. Many transgender people are able to obtain a legal name change from a court. However, some transgender people cannot afford a legal name change or are not yet old enough to legally change their name. They should be afforded the same respect for their chosen name as anyone else who uses a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities).

Use the pronoun that matches the person's authentic gender. A person who identifies as a certain gender, whether or not that person has taken hormones or undergone surgery, should be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender. If you are not certain which pronoun to use, ask the person, "What pronouns do you use?"

Some people use the singular they to reflect their non-binary gender identity. In 2015, The Washington Post updated its style guide to include the singular they to describe people who "identify as neither male nor female." It is increasingly common for people who have a non-binary gender identity to use they/them as their pronoun. For example: "Jacob writes eloquently about their non-binary identity. They have also appeared frequently in the media to talk about their family's reaction to their gender expression."

Other terms you might hear: Some people who have the capacity to be attracted to people of any gender may consider themselves part of the bi+ community and/or choose other words to describe their sexual orientation, such as: pansexual, polysexual, omnisexual, fluid, queer, and more. Some people prefer to avoid any label at all. Given the lack of understanding of even the word bisexual, it's best to only use alternate words if someone specifically self-identifies that way and asks for their preferred term to be used.



"Iowa and the United States have made significant advances toward equality over the past decade, which is a reason to celebrate and appreciate all the sacrifices and progress made! However, make no mistake, all of our freedom and liberty is on the chopping block daily. We have to recognize these are still challenging times. We must recognize the battle is far from over and we must remain vigilant. Our progress should not be taken for granted."

Sen. Matt McCoy, State Senator



"As we celebrate our great and diverse community and honor our many accomplishments we must keep pushing forward to ensure full equality for all and make a commitment to stay vigilant so that rights now gained are not lost tomorrow. The truth is our transgender brothers and sisters face violence and widespread discrimination, lgbtq people lack equal protection under the law in many states, our children are bullied, our desperate take their own lives, and I am one of just a very small handful of LGBTQ citizens to hold elected office in Iowa. There are vicious forces at work everyday that would like to take away our right to marry, to adopt, and to live freely, some would even take our lives. We must never become complacent or too comfortable, rights won over the course of decades by the blood sweat and tears of our many martyrs can be taken away in the blink of an eye. We must forever stand in solidarity with all members of our community and band together so that we can fully realize the promise of our movement."

Chris Schwartz, Openly Gay Black Hawk County Supervisor



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Sexual Orientation

The scientifically accurate term for an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/ or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual (straight) orientations. Avoid the offensive term "sexual preference," which is used to suggest that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is voluntary and therefore "curable." People need not have had specific sexual experiences to know their own sexual orientation; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all.

Gay

The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex (e.g., gay man, gay people). Sometimes lesbian (n. or adj.) is the preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals" an outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people.

Lesbian

A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women. Some lesbians may prefer to identify as gay (adj.) or as gay women. Avoid identifying lesbians as "homosexuals," a derogatory term (see Offensive Terms to Avoid).

Bisexual, Bi

A person who has the capacity to form enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attractions to those of the same gender or to those of another gender. People may experience this attraction in differing ways and degrees over their lifetime. Bisexual people need not have had specific sexual experiences to be bisexual; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Do not use a hyphen in the word "bisexual," and only capitalize bisexual when used at the beginning of a sentence.

Transgender (adj.)

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including transgender. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term preferred by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.



Transsexual (adj.)

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries. Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender. It is best to ask which term a person prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.

Trans

Used as shorthand to mean transgender or transsexual - or sometimes to be inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella. Because its meaning is not precise or widely understood, be careful when using it with audiences who may not understand what it means. Avoid unless used in a direct quote or in cases where you can clearly explain the term's meaning in the context of your story.

Queer

An adjective used by some people, particularly younger people, whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual (e.g. queer person, queer woman). Typically, for those who identify as queer, the terms lesbian, gay, and bisexual are perceived to be too limiting and/or fraught with cultural connotations they feel don't apply to them. Some people may use queer, or more commonly genderqueer, to describe their gender identity and/or gender expression (see non-binary and/or genderqueer below). Once considered a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBT people to describe themselves; however, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBT community. When Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it typically means queer and, less often, questioning.

LGBTQ

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer. Sometimes, when the Q is seen at the end of LGBT, it can also mean questioning. LGBT and/or GLBT are also often used. The term "gay community" should be avoided, as it does not accurately reflect the diversity of the community. Rather, LGBTQ community is preferred.

Intersex

An umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female. Those variations are also sometimes referred to as Differences of Sex Development (DSD.) Avoid the outdated and derogatory term "hermaphrodite." While some people can have an intersex condition and also identify as transgender, the two are separate and should not be conflated. (For more information, visit interactyouth.org.)

Asexual

An adjective used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction (e.g., asexual person). A person can also be aromantic, meaning they do not experience romantic attraction. (For more information, visit asexuality.org.)



Heterosexual

An adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, and/ or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. Also straight.

Homosexual

(see Offensive Terms to Avoid) Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive. The Associated Press, New York Times and Washington Post restrict usage of the term.

Homophobia

Fear of people attracted to the same sex. Intolerance, bias, or prejudice is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward LGBTQ people.

Biphobia

Fear of bisexuals, often based on stereotypes, including inaccurate associations with infidelity, promiscuity, and transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Intolerance, bias, or prejudice is usually a more accurate description of antipathy toward bisexual people.

Coming Out

A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a LGBTQ identity first to themselves and then they may reveal it to others. Publicly sharing one's identity may or may not be part of coming out.

Out

A person who self-identifies as LGBTQ in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. For example: Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico. Preferred to openly gay.

Openly Gay

Describes people who self-identify as gay in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. Also openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly transgender, openly queer. While accurate and commonly used, the phrase still implies a confessional aspect to publicly acknowledging one's sexual orientation or gender identity. See out above.

Closeted

Describes a person who is not open about their sexual orientation. Better to simply refer to someone as "not out" about being LGBTQ. Some individuals may be out to some people in their life, but not out to others due to fear of rejection, harassment, violence, losing one's job, or other concerns.

Outing

The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBTQ community.



Lifestyle

(see Offensive Terms to Avoid) Inaccurate term used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to denigrate LGBTQ people. As there is no one straight lifestyle, there is no one LGBTQ lifestyle.

Marriage

In June 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that every American has the constitutional right to marry the person they love. When reporting on marriage for same-sex couples, preferred terminology includes marriage equality and marriage for same-sex couples. Note, the terms "gay marriage" and "same-sex marriage" should be avoided, as they can suggest marriage for same-sex couples is somehow different than other marriages.

Civil Union

Historically used in the U.S. to describe state-based relationship recognition for same-sex couples that offered some or all of the state (though none of the federal) rights, protections, and responsibilities of marriage. While many Western countries (including the United States) have now legalized marriage for same-sex couples, others only legally recognize same-sex relationships through civil unions.

Domestic Partnership

Civil/legal recognition of a committed relationship between two people that sometimes extends limited protections to them.

Sodomy Laws

Historically used to selectively persecute gay people, the state laws often referred to as "sodomy laws" were ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003). "Sodomy" should never be used to describe same-sex relationships or sexual orientation.



“The LGBTQ community has been an important part of both US and Iowa History. Through decades of hard work, LGBTQ individuals have begun securing equal civil protections throughout the country. In Iowa this includes marriage equality, anti-discrimination laws, hate crimes protections, and many others. These efforts continue as One Iowa works to preserve and advance equality for LGBTQ Iowans. It is imperative that LGBTQ individuals are accurately represented throughout our community. LGBTQ individuals continue to be stigmatized and stereotyped, practices that contribute to creating environments that are unsafe or openly hostile. Terminology, pronouns, names, and so much more are critical to portraying LGBTQ individuals in the news. News outlets must strive to build and maintain trust within the LGBTQ community through a commitment to following best practices that address these issues. As the leading LGBTQ advocacy organization, One Iowa is committed to providing this assistance.

Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, Executive Director, One Iowa



"Iowans, including people of faith and no faith across our state, are honored to stand with family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers in the LGBTQ community. Iowa has a strong, progressive history of being on the right side of history regarding equal rights and protections. There is little doubt that Iowa will continue on that path to ensure all Iowans are treated with dignity, respect and equality under the law. Under no circumstances should anyone be discriminated against or face violence simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Education is key in this journey toward equality. It is our hope that this guide will move our state further down the path to understanding and accuracy."

Connie Ryan, Executive Director, Interfaith Alliance of Iowa



TERMS TO AVOID

OFFENSIVE	PREFERRED
<p>“homosexual” (n. or adj.)</p> <p>Because of the clinical history of the word “homosexual,” it is aggressively used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically/emotionally disordered – notions discredited by the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association in the 1970s. Please avoid using “homosexual” except in direct quotes. Please also avoid using “homosexual” as a style variation simply to avoid repeated use of the word “gay.” The Associated Press, The New York Times and The Washington Post restrict use of the term “homosexual” (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style).</p>	<p>“gay” (adj.); “gay man” or “lesbian” (n.); “gay person/people”</p> <p>Please use gay, lesbian, or when appropriate bisexual or queer to describe people attracted to members of the same sex.</p>
<p>“homosexual relations/relationship,” “homosexual couple,” “homosexual sex,” etc.</p> <p>Identifying a same-sex couple as “a homosexual couple,” characterizing their relationship as “a homosexual relationship,” or identifying their intimacy as “homosexual sex” is extremely offensive and should be avoided. These constructions are frequently used by anti-LGBTQ extremists to denigrate LGBTQ people, couples, and relationships.</p>	<p>“relationship,” “couple” (or, if necessary, “gay/lesbian/same-sex couple”), “sex,” etc.</p> <p>As a rule, try to avoid labeling an activity, emotion, or relationship gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer unless you would call the same activity, emotion, or relationship “straight” if engaged in by someone of another orientation. In most cases, your readers, viewers, or listeners will be able to discern people’s sexes and/or orientations through the names of the parties involved, your depictions of their relationships, and your use of pronouns.</p>



TERMS TO AVOID (cont.)

OFFENSIVE	PREFERRED
<p>“sexual preference”</p> <p>The term “sexual preference” is typically used to suggest that being attracted to the same sex is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured.”</p>	<p>“sexual orientation” or “orientation”</p> <p>Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual’s enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to members of the same and/or opposite sex and is inclusive of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer people, as well as straight men and women (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style).</p>
<p>“gay lifestyle,” “homosexual lifestyle,” or “transgender lifestyle”</p> <p>There is no single LGBTQ lifestyle. LGBTQ people are diverse in the ways they lead their lives. The phrases “gay lifestyle,” “homosexual lifestyle,” and “transgender lifestyle” are used to denigrate LGBTQ people suggesting that their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (see Transgender Glossary of Terms) is a choice and therefore can and should be “cured” (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style).</p>	<p>“LGBTQ people and their lives”</p>
<p>“admitted homosexual” or “avowed homosexual”</p> <p>Dated terms used to describe those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. The words “admitted” or “avowed” suggest that being attracted to the same sex is somehow shameful or inherently secretive.</p>	<p>“out gay man,” “out lesbian,” or “out queer person”</p> <p>You may also simply describe the person as being out, for example: “Ricky Martin is an out pop star from Puerto Rico.” Avoid the use of the word “homosexual” in any case (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style).</p>



TERMS TO AVOID (cont.)

OFFENSIVE	PREFERRED
<p>“gay agenda” or “homosexual agenda”</p> <p>Notions of a so-called “homosexual agenda” are rhetorical inventions of anti-LGBTQ extremists seeking to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal opportunity for LGBTQ people as sinister (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style).</p>	<p>“Accurate descriptions of the issues (e.g., “inclusion in existing nondiscrimination laws,” “securing equal employment protections”)</p> <p>LGBTQ people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns, and desires as other everyday Americans. They seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in their communities, serve their country, and take care of the ones they love. Their commitment to equality and acceptance is one they share with many allies and advocates who are not LGBTQ.</p>
<p>“special rights”</p> <p>Anti-LGBTQ extremists frequently characterize equal protection of the law for LGBTQ people as “special rights” to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive nondiscrimination laws (see AP, Reuters, & New York Times Style). As such, the term should be avoided.</p>	<p>“equal rights” or “equal protection”</p>



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REFERENCES

GLAAD Media Reference Guide

<https://www.glaad.org/reference>

Iowa's Equality Profile (info on state laws)

http://www.lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/profile_state/IA

