



ellen krug
writer, lawyer, human

“Trans 101”

Presentation Description: Persons who are transgender have become far more visible, which is reflective of greater societal acceptance. Still, of the letters in the “LGBTQ alphabet” (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer), the “Ts” (transgender persons) more often face unique challenges relative to personal relationships, public interactions, and many other things that non-transgender persons (the technical phrase is “cisgender”) take for granted.

What does it mean to be a “trans” person? What can other humans do to make trans people feel welcomed and accepted? What actions or words should they avoid? How does “passing” or not “passing” or the absence of legal rights in many states play into a transgender person’s daily life?

With Ellie’s “Trans 101” presentation, audience members learn the basics about what it means to be transgender and get advice on how to be inclusive toward anyone who identifies as trans. The talk can also include Ellie sharing about her personal story, which audience members may also learn more about through her memoir, *Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change* (Stepladder Press 2013). (Note: some Sponsors ask for all of Ellie’s story; others seek a more limited approach—the presentation can be fashioned however a Sponsor desires.)

Why this Presentation Works: Being transgender herself, Ellie can speak firsthand about transitioning genders later in life (at age fifty-two), a process she describes as “gender correcting.” There’s nothing theoretical here; audience members learn the basics from someone who spent decades believing she could “choose” to remain male, only to discover that gender, like sexuality, artistic bend and a host of other human needs, isn’t something that someone can “choose.”

An added dimension to this talk is that Ellie’s personal story has something for almost every listener—human denial; realization of one’s mortality; lost love and security; achievement of inner peace and authenticity; and earning a “do-over” in life.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understanding the basics about what it means to be transgender—defining/discussing gender identity, gender expression, and social/surgical

gender transitioning. This includes a discussion about whether gender identity is something that one can consciously “choose.”

2. Understanding that not only do transgender persons who come out in their “true” genders “transition,” but that family members, co-workers, intimate partners and others also “transition” in their thinking and interactions as well.
3. Appreciating the need for proper pronoun usage and “allyship” as ways of welcoming/being accepting of a trans person. This includes what not to say/what questions not to ask.
4. Understanding what it means to “pass” in one’s “true” gender and the challenges that both the trans person and cisgender people face when, like Ellie (due to her voice), a transgender person doesn’t “pass 100 percent.”
5. Education on what states/locales legally protect transgender persons and the business/personal ramifications of trans people being “legal” in only 19 states (as of 2016).

Mechanics: This is a lecture-type presentation where audience questions and comments are encouraged. All attendees are presented with a handout. (Unless otherwise arranged, the Sponsor will bear the cost of copying/distributing the handout.)

Technical Needs: This presentation requires a small space for Ellie to “roam” as she speaks. (Ellie doesn’t utilize a podium or power point for her presentations).

Duration: 75 minutes at a minimum; up to 120+ minutes depending on Sponsor’s goals and the extent to which Ellie is asked to share about her personal story.

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