



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

# DISCLOSURE

A FILM BY SAM FEDER AND AMY SCHOLDER





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# USING THIS GUIDE

The resources in these pages have been assembled to help you engage in conversations that connect family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and communities. Typically you'll only need a couple of prompts to get a discussion started. Some of the guide's suggestions will meet your specific needs and others are best suited for people in situations that are different from yours. Anything that helps your particular audience think more deeply about the issues in the film is a good choice.

We invite you to let the spirit of **DISCLOSURE** set the tone for your conversations. The film reveals aspects of trans lives and stories that are inspiring, surprising, and sometimes difficult—all in a context that leads towards insight and healing.

As the film notes, what makes marginalized groups visible can also make them vulnerable. That's why we strongly recommend that event leaders take a look at our **DISCLOSURE toolkits** for facilitation suggestions and language recommendations. To get the most from your discussion, make sure you create a space that is safe for everyone to share. Remind people that they are in dialogue, not a debate. It's not about winning, it's about learning. Listening will be as important as sharing.



*Executive Producer Laverne Cox*

# A LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKERS

We all need to be seen, and often being seen is what puts marginalized people in harm's way. It is that paradox of visibility which inspired us to make **DISCLOSURE**. We looked to one of the most compelling modes of storytelling—Hollywood film and TV—to consider how trans people have learned to think about ourselves, and what non trans people have been taught to think about us.

For three years, we worked together researching, producing, and editing **DISCLOSURE**. Along the way we collaborated with over 100 other trans filmmakers, assembling a history of trans representation in mainstream film and TV. While sharing footage, articles, and ideas, we wrestled with the dehumanizing stereotypes, tropes, and sometimes empowering aspects of this history. It's often been painful to confront some of this material, but we think it's meaningful to show it here and now. Together we were able to acknowledge and sometimes find humor in the absurdity, which has been cathartic.

We did not want to demonize any one person or any one story; we wanted to construct a nuanced film that includes many, often conflicting ways of seeing. We can love something and look at it critically.

There are so many more people, materials, and stories to tell and ways to tell them, which didn't make it into this film. There is more within and outside of Hollywood that is crucial to trans audiences. There are so many trans filmmakers who have created pivotal stories.

**DISCLOSURE** won't be the only history of trans representation. It's just a start. We can't wait to see how it is received, built upon, and grappled with. And we can't wait to see what comes next.

- Sam Feder, Amy Scholder, and Laverne Cox



**SAM FEDER**  
DIRECTOR



**AMY SCHOLDER**  
PRODUCER



**LAVERNE COX**  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

**Note to facilitators: Sharing and/or reading the letter aloud can be a great way to kick off a post-film discussion.**

## FILM SUMMARY

**DISCLOSURE** is an unprecedented, eye-opening look at transgender depictions in film and television, revealing how Hollywood simultaneously reflects and manufactures our deepest anxieties about gender. Leading trans thinkers and creatives, including Laverne Cox, Lilly Wachowski, Yance Ford, Mj Rodriguez, Jamie Clayton, and Chaz Bono, share their reactions and resistance to some of Hollywood's most beloved moments. Grappling with films like *A Florida Enchantment* (1914), *Dog Day Afternoon*, *The Crying Game*, and *Boys Don't Cry*, and with TV shows like *The Jeffersons*, *The L Word*, and *Pose*, they trace a history that is at once dehumanizing, yet also evolving, complex, and sometimes humorous. What emerges is a fascinating story of dynamic interplay between trans representation on screen, society's beliefs, and the reality of trans lives. Reframing familiar scenes and iconic characters in a new light, director Sam Feder invites viewers to confront unexamined assumptions, and shows how what once captured the American imagination now elicits new feelings. **DISCLOSURE** provokes a startling revolution in how we see and understand trans people.

# DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Note: For some people, DISCLOSURE can evoke strong emotions and deeply complex personal questions related to gender identity. Sometimes those reactions require support that you may not be qualified to provide. We recommend that you have available a list of qualified local support organizations and/or counseling professionals with experience in legal, psychological, and/or health issues specific to gender identity or being transgender. You may even want to invite representatives to attend your event and give them a few moments after the discussion to describe what they do.



*Director Sam Feder (left) and Jen Richards*

## OPENING QUESTIONS

These can help to get a discussion going.

- In a word (literally, a single word or phrase), how did seeing this film make you feel? (This can work well for small or medium sized groups as a quick go-round, to take the temperature of the room).
- Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly affirming, challenging, intriguing, or moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling for you?
- If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, whom would you ask and what would you want to know? Why is that question important to you?
- You could also kick off a discussion by reading aloud the letter from the filmmakers.



"When I first saw a clip from **DISCLOSURE**, it was clear to me that as bystanders and consumers of media content, we are culpable in promoting the harmful narrative that puts the lives of transgender people in grave danger. If we truly believe in an equal future for all, we must speak up in support of the transgender community. The narratives we share and the beliefs we internalize can cause great harm and build up an already unjust system of exclusion. As allies, we need to show up from a place of generosity and uphold the dignity of trans identities and their rights to live a full, joyful and authentic life. Trans people are a beautiful part of human diversity and have been for centuries. I firmly believe that discriminatory policies are tantamount to violence and must be prevented and overturned at all levels. Universal rights and dignity are essential for all members of the human family. My heartfelt thanks to you for watching and sharing **DISCLOSURE** with your community."



**S. MONA SINHA**

**DISCLOSURE** Executive Producer  
and Partnership Advisors

## UNDERSTANDING MEDIA INFLUENCES

- Were any of the film and television clips in the film familiar to you? Do you remember your reaction when you first saw them? How does that initial viewing experience compare to the way you see things now?
- What messages about transgender people have been most common in the media you watch? How have those messages shaped the way that you think about transgender women, men, nonbinary people and youth?
- What did you learn from the film about the ways that distorted media depictions of transgender people are harmful to transgender people and also society?
- Who stands to benefit from problematic depictions of transgender people and what do they stand to gain? How might this intersect with who benefits from other forms of discrimination and hate like racism, sexism, or homophobia?
- Laverne Cox shares, "According to a study from GLAAD, 80% of Americans don't actually personally know someone who is transgender." How do you think having personal connections changes the way a person looks at media portrayals of trans people compared with someone who doesn't (or thinks they don't) know any transgender people?
- How have media influenced your own perceptions of your gender? How have media shaped your idea of "normal" ways to express your gender?

# UNDERSTANDING GENDER CONSTRUCTION

- When challenged, Caroline Cossey states, “I don’t have to prove to anyone or myself that I’m a woman. I am a woman.” Why do you think some people question whether trans women are “real women” or trans men are “real men”?
- What does it mean to say that gender is a “social construct” or that there is such a thing as a “real man” or a “real woman”? Who gains power by declaring that some people do not fit within the boundaries of manhood or womanhood?
- Given the many ways that trans people express their gender, in what ways do trans people expand ideas about gender?

# HUMOR

- The film opens with the line: “Do you know that feeling when you’re sitting in a movie theater and everyone’s laughing at something and you just don’t get it?” What do the things we laugh at reveal about our lives and identities? How is humor used to deal with things we fear or that make us uncomfortable? When is such humor beneficial? Harmful?
- Bianca Leigh describes having a radar that distinguishes between joking that signals affinity/inclusion and being the butt of the joke. How do you tell the difference between good-natured teasing among friends and making fun of someone in a way that is hurtful? How might your feelings about a joke change if you have a personal connection to the thing being joked about?
- How would you answer when Tiq Milan asks, “If I’m not laughing, is it a joke?”
- Laverne Cox points out that the source of comedic tension in films like *Tootsie* or shows like *Bosom Buddies* are all real obstacles for trans people. At what point is something so hurtful to a group that it becomes taboo as a comic device?



Chaz Bono



Alexandra Grey



Candis Cayne



Brian Michael Smith

# PERFORMING GENDER

- DISCLOSURE shows the long history of media depictions of people dressing up as the “opposite sex.” But the audience always knew that the person they saw on screen dressed as a man was a woman (e.g., *Yentl*, *Just One of the Guys*) or the person they saw dressed as a woman was a man (e.g., *The Three Stooges*, *Bosom Buddies*). How did this device simultaneously hide trans experience while also providing opportunities for some transgender people to imagine that they were seeing themselves on screen?
- Commenting on early film footage, Laverne Cox notes that, historically, crossdressing was illegal, “So that someone who decided to transgress gender expectations in real life was often harassed and arrested.” Zackary Drucker makes the same observation of drag ball images from the fifties and sixties. How does it influence your interpretive lens to know that prior to the eighties it was possible to crossdress as part of a performance, but that same clothing (or hair or makeup) on the street in real life was usually illegal?
- Laverne Cox shares, “It’s just fascinating that some of the earliest moving images were crossdressed images. When you watch, it very much feels like womanhood is silly and is to be mocked.” How might crossdressing invite the mocking of femininity? How might it celebrate femininity? What context clues signal one or the other?
- Jen Richards explains that some transgender women “imitate an older version of femininity that they learned that men like from movies and TV.” What do you think she means by this? How are people who fit these “traditional” expressions of gender treated differently from people who do not?
- Jen Richards notes that “a lot of people will look at trans women’s performance of femininity and see it as somehow reinforcing the worst patriarchal stereotypes of women.” Richards goes on to explain that trans women need to go “hyper-feminine” to protect themselves as a matter of survival—it’s their “armor.” Why do you think the performance of femininity in particular is so heavily scrutinized? Why, in particular, do people question trans women for presenting in a hyper-feminine way?
- How do gendered rules about who can wear certain types of clothing or hairstyles or cosmetics reveal links between sexism and transphobia? In what ways does mocking femininity disempower everyone?







Tre'Vell Anderson



Jamie Clayton



Jazzmun Nichala Crayton



Chase Strangio

## TROPES & STEREOTYPES

- The film describes a limited range of roles for trans characters, mostly as “deviant” (murderers, sex workers, drug addicts, victims). What’s the harm of repeating these tropes? How do media tropes create, shape, and amplify cultural stereotypes?
- Jen Richards tells the story of telling a friend about her upcoming transition and that Buffalo Bill “was her only reference point, that her only template for understanding, was a sick, psychotic, serial killer. It hurts. It just hurts.” How does this illustrate the need to take the impact and influence of pop culture seriously, even when we know it’s presenting fiction?
- Trace Lysette adds, “If you’re only seeing us as one thing without any life outside of that, people are never going to get to see us as a whole person.” Popular media are filled with all sorts of shallow characters and tropes in place of fully formed, complicated human beings. How do those shallow portrayals affect marginalized people differently than those in the majority?
- Alexandra Billings talks about her roles on “a lot of hospital shows. I died a lot. They kept killing me.” What other roles are available on those shows? What’s the difference between representation as simple inclusion and representation that is transformative?
- Susan Stryker notes that Christine Jorgensen was “not the first person to have genital surgery or take hormones, but she was the first person to become globally famous for doing that. This was the image of transgender for a generation of people.” What was it about her that made her acceptable for appearances in mainstream media? Why do you suppose media gave her air time?
- Jen Richards observes, if there were many transgender characters in media, “the occasional clumsy representation wouldn’t matter as much because it wouldn’t be all that there is.” What could studios, producers, writers, or directors do to challenge the repetition of the familiar and damaging tropes? What might change if
  - studios hired more trans writers and directors?
  - trans experts were hired as advisers to review all scripts involving trans characters (just like medical shows hire physicians, cop shows hire cops, or trial dramas hire legal experts)?
  - casting directors considered trans actors for all sorts of roles?
- Laverne Cox explains that, paradoxically, with increased visibility has come increased violence against trans people. Chase Strangio explains one possible link: “The trans person on the red carpet or the trans character on television and film, those representations of transness may incite rage in a viewer. And that viewer doesn’t have access to the character. They have access to the person on the streets.” In addition to Strangio’s observation, what else might account for the link between increased visibility and increased real life violence?

# SEARCHING FOR SELF

- Nick Adams observes that “just like the 80% of Americans who say they don't know a trans person, that's often true of trans people as well. We don't know a trans person when we're trying to figure out who we are. So we're looking to the media, trying to figure out, who's like us?” What role did media play in the development of your own sense of self development?
- Jen Richards says, “Every trans person carries within themselves a history of trans representation just in terms of what they've seen themselves.” What's the effect of never seeing yourself in media or seeing depictions that were supposed to be you but were wrong or distorted? How do people in the film resolve the ongoing tensions over seeing problematic portrayals of transgender lives yet being grateful for those portrayals because they're so hungry for an affirmation that anyone remotely like them exists?
- Laverne Cox shares the complexities of seeing portrayals of trans people as she was growing up. What insights does she offer about
  - how characters affected the way she thought about herself?
  - how portrayals influenced the ways that others thought of her?
  - being able to do counter-readings of characters so she could experience being recognized somewhere?
- Rain Valdez recalls being seven or eight years old and watching *Soapdish* with family and thinking that her future choices would be bleak (be a bad guy or be yourself but not be loved). “And we never really talked about it after that. But I remember the next day my mom would try to get me to wear more masculine clothes.” Have media portrayals ever made you afraid to be who you are? Have you ever used a media portrayal to start conversations about issues that were important to you? How did it go?
- Yentl isn't a transgender character; she's a woman who disguises herself as a man in order to be permitted to study. So how/why might Laverne Cox see herself in that character?
- Jen Richards celebrates the fact that, “For the first time trans people are taking center of their own storytelling.” What's the impact of people having opportunities to tell their own stories in mainstream media? What problems are created when people who aren't part of a group speak for that group (e.g., white people speaking for BIPOC, adults speaking for youth, policy makers making decisions without seeking input from those who will be impacted by legislative decision-making)?
- Lilly Wachowski and Susan Stryker both mention that they saw themselves in Bugs Bunny. Stryker explains that growing up in the sixties, “the only, only positive representation I saw of anything trans feminine was Bugs Bunny. When Bugs Bunny was doing girl, Bugs Bunny was desirable and was powerful.” What do you think it would be like to have the only media representation of you be something that wasn't real—a cartoon character?
- Tiq Milan says that characters like those in *Just One of the Guys* and *Yentl*, “played with this idea of transness as a way of occupying a space that you necessarily aren't supposed to have.” What's appealing about claiming space that is supposed to be off limits to you? What's scary about it?



Ser Anzoategui



Bianca Leigh



Tiq Milan



Brian Michael Smith



Mj Rodriguez



Chaz Bono



Jamie Clayton



Sandra Caldwell

## SEARCHING FOR SELF

- Tre’Vell Anderson talks about Laverne Cox’s role in *Orange Is the New Black*: “To see that character over the years, the complexities, the backstory, the power that she’s kind of given in the Black community, the hairdresser it’s the pinnacle, right? And the fact that there’s a Black trans woman running this, that was amazing to me.” Trace Lysette adds, “To me, it was like seeing a trans woman winning while being trans.” Jazzmun brings us back to reality noting that, “At the same time, she’s still in jail and she’s still a problem in society. She’s still a menace to society. It’s not like she’s changing people’s lives by doing these prisoners’ hair. So come on, but she’s such a smart woman. I’m a big fan.” If you’ve seen the show, what was your reaction to Cox’s character? How does the character empower trans women, especially trans women of color, despite the drama’s prison setting?
- Caitlyn Jenner brought a lot of visibility to the trans community, from the atypical perspective of someone who is moneyed, white, and very privileged. Jen Richards says “the show did a lot of good” even if you disagree with Jenner’s politics. What do you think? Do some portrayals of trans people in media do more harm than good, or is showing the diversity of trans experience always more beneficial than invisibility? How does the influence of commercial appeal and “what sells” affect which trans lives are portrayed in media and which remain off screen?

# TRANS MEN & TRANSMASCULINE REPRESENTATION

- Zeke Smith observes that “We don't see as much representation of trans men as we do trans women because people don't think trans men are as sensational.” Brian Michael Smith explains that “trans men are not as recognizable.” Jen Richards suggests that “women overall, including trans women, are a more commodifiable asset.” Why do you think there are fewer media representations of trans men and trans masculine people compared with trans women and femmes?
- Nick Adams raises the issue that trans women are mocked, but trans men are invisible, even though in real life there are about equal numbers of trans men and women. In your view, is this simply two sides of the same oppressive coin, or do the distinctions reveal something important about the ways that transgender men and women experience discrimination?
- Brian Michael Smith describes the mixed messaging in *Just One of the Guys*. What was empowering and what was disempowering to him?
- Zeke Smith recalls feeling visible when he saw a clip from *Boys Don't Cry*, while Michael D. Cohen says he was “blown away.” Laverne Cox remembers seeing *Boys Don't Cry* and thinking, “Oh my God, I'm going to die.” How is it possible for a film to be both affirming and upsetting?
- *The L Word*, a primetime premium cable drama centered on the lives of a group of lesbians, was the first television series to include a recurring trans masculine character, Max. Ironically, while it gives trans men visibility, it interprets the character in a way that devalues trans male experience. Consider why these moments in the dialogue between Kit Porter (Pam Grier's character) and Max undermine Max's experiences as a trans man:
  - As a butch lesbian, Max is “nice and likable,” but the result of transitioning to identifying as a trans man makes him “a raging a-hole.” As Kit explains, “men are sexist assholes. You were a woman, you should know better.”
  - Kit says, “It just saddens me to see so many of our strong butch girls giving up their womanhood to be a man. Why can't you be the butchest butch in the world and keep your body?” She sees it as giving up something that is precious to her, being a woman. Max responds: “Because I want to feel whole. I want the outside of me to match the inside of me.”
  - Zeke Smith notes that the story is told from a perspective that indicates “We're not supposed to root for Max.” We see Max get a job in the tech sector, in part because he now has the privilege that is conveyed to white men, though he doesn't recognize that privilege and is happy to partake of the benefits that are so often denied to women in general, and non-femme lesbians in particular.

If you were to create a counter-narrative to these conversations in *The L-Word* what might that look like? How can we acknowledge and unpack the intersecting privileges and oppressions at play in this conversation?

# CROSSING BOUNDARIES OF RACE & GENDER

- Laverne Cox talks about the impact of Black men in America being portrayed as hyper-masculine and predatory. How does this particular negative stereotype reinforce misogyny, sexism, and white supremacy? How does this stereotype complicate identity formation for Black trans women?
- Why would putting a Black man in a dress make him seem less threatening, as Laverne Cox notes? Less threatening to whom? How does this trope reinforce both racism and misogyny?
- Yance Ford acknowledges that “There are lots of ugly things about our history that feel like an assault, I think. But I think we have to know them. I think we have to learn them.” Why is it important to learn them? How does the traditional canon of works studied in film schools shape our collective understanding of our past and, therefore, also our present?
- What was your reaction to the scenes from *A Florida Enchantment*, which depict a fantasy world in which eating a seed transforms a white woman into a dandy and a Black woman into his aggressive, violent valet? Why might so many early films have relied on racism (including the use of blackface) even as they played with breaking the boundaries of gender roles? Why could they stretch some boundaries but not others?
- Laverne Cox describes the essence of critical distance when she says, “When you are a member of a marginalized community, most of film and television is not made with you in mind. And so if you are a person of color, an LGBTQ person, a person who’s an immigrant, a person with a disability, you develop a critical awareness because you understand that the images that you’re seeing are not your life.” Are there places in your own life where you have gained important insight from having critical distance? In what ways can being able to look in from the outside be beneficial? When is being an “outsider” simply a harmful function of discrimination or exclusion?
- *Boys Don’t Cry* was based on a true story, but creators chose to leave out Phillip DeVine, the Black friend who was also murdered. Describe how different the viewing experience would be for someone walking into the theater knowing Phillip DeVine’s story compared with the experience of a viewer who had never heard of Phillip DeVine.
- Tiq Milan explains his reaction to *Boys Don’t Cry*’s choice to omit Phillip DeVine, saying it tells “me that I can’t exist in my Blackness and my queerness and my transness. I can’t bring all of this in at the same time.” Why is it important for people to see representations of our whole selves?
- Rain Valdez recalls being confused that people would ask if she had seen *M Butterfly*. How does the question speak to the issue of tokenism?
- *Paris Is Burning* was one of the first documentary films with real trans people to get mainstream attention that showed real transgender people (not fictional characters) as complex and successful. What is it about “firsts” that makes them so powerful? How would you answer Laverne Cox’s query: “What does it mean to go into cultures that you don’t exist in and tell those stories...”?

## CROSSING BOUNDARIES OF RACE & GENDER

- When Mj Rodriguez saw *Paris Is Burning* as a kid, she recalls seeing “beautiful people on the screen... I didn't hear the words. I just saw the happiness and joy.” Others recalled the family bond as especially powerful. And still others, like Trace Lysette saw a reflection of “myself as a working class, trans woman in New York City.” Imagine the differences in experience for the people who appeared in *Paris Is Burning* and the people who watched it. What were the risks and rewards for each?
- Tiq Milan notes that the storylines in *Pose* were “really complex, endearing, and inspiring.” He attributes that success to trans folks being behind the scenes, not just on screen. In your view, in what ways do the identities of people on production teams and in executive suites influence what we see (or don't see) on screen?
- Laverne Cox notes that *Pose* is different from other mainstream TV shows because its stories “center Black trans women.” In terms of impact, what's the difference between including a trans character and centering trans characters?



Christine Jorgensen



Zackary Drucker



Christina Haywork



Rain Valdez



Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson



Jazzmun Nichala Crayton

# TALK SHOWS

- How do shows that genuinely seek to help their audiences learn and gain a better understanding of transgender lives avoid objectifying trans people?
- How does a preoccupation with the physical aspects of transition take away from trans people's humanity? What's dehumanizing about talk shows that
  - allow hosts or audience members to ask trans people personal questions about their bodies?
  - play a guessing game to see if people can tell if they are looking at a man or a woman?
- Ser Anzoategui advises people to analyze their comments and questions by imagining that someone else was asking them to you. When you see the talk show clips in the film, how do you think it would feel to be publicly asked the questions that trans guests were asked?
- How would you describe the interaction between Caroline Cossey and Arsenio Hall? What did she do to indicate that the questions were inappropriate without alienating the host or the audience?
- What does it say about our culture that seeing Reno on *The Jerry Springer Show* was the first time that Marquise Vilsón saw somebody Black and trans masculine on television? He describes the moment: "At that point, I'm high school age, and in and out of the shelter system, couch surfing. Typical black queer trans stuff in New York City. And I don't even believe that someone like me really exists. So to see this image in front of me on TV, I mean, it really was empowering." How could a show that is the epitome of sensationalism be empowering for Vilsón?

# THE BIG REVEAL

- What's the significance of the film's title? What do you disclose about yourself to others? What would you want to disclose about yourself to colleagues, lovers, partners, friends, family, classmates, and employers respectively?
- Sandra Caldwell spent years as a successful "stealth" actor (someone who is not visibly trans), always afraid that someone would find out she was transgender: "Your head is trying desperately to stay in the scene. You wake up afraid, you go to sleep afraid. You're trying to figure out if somebody is going to drop the bomb that day, the next day, when is it going to happen? So you're just afraid all the time..." What changed that finally encouraged her to be herself? How does visibility beget visibility?
- Brian Michael Smith laughs about the trope of baring breasts as a kind of gender reveal to "prove" that a character is "another gender" instead of just having a conversation. What are the messages conveyed by the use of anatomy as the ultimate reflection of gender?
- Michael D. Cohen remembers seeing "big reveal" reaction scenes, like in *The Crying Game*, and wondering if people would be repelled when he revealed that he was transgender. Nick Adams explains, "Hollywood is teaching people that the way you react when you see a transgender person's body is to vomit." Before viewing **DISCLOSURE**, had you seen films/TV shows in which this happened? Did you think they were funny? How do you suppose your reaction affected the way you think about trans people? If you had to predict, how do you think that seeing **DISCLOSURE** will change the way you react when seeing scenes that replicate these tropes now?

# TRANS ACTING

- What gender ideologies are at play in the studio decision that trans actress Elizabeth Eden “looked too much like a real woman to play the part” of a trans woman in *Dog Day Afternoon*?
- Jen Richards says, “The public thinks of trans women as men with really good hair and makeup in costume. And that’s reinforced every time we see a man who’s played a trans woman off screen.” How have casting decisions contributed to the idea that trans women are not women, but men in disguise? How is this harmful? What are some of the real world consequences of this misguided notion?
- Why, historically, do you think Academy members have rewarded non-transgender actors for playing trans characters? What ideologies influence Academy members to view the role of a trans character as a particularly difficult acting challenge? Do you think they would be as likely to reward a transgender person playing a trans character as they would a cis man playing a trans woman (or a cis woman playing a trans man)?
- Chaz Bono describes appearing on *Dancing with the Stars* despite a lack of dancing experience or aptitude because it was an opportunity to reach “an audience that was going to be larger than had ever been in contact with a transgender person at that point before.” Much like when he produced the documentary *Becoming Chaz*, the point was “to try to put a face on an issue that people don’t understand.” What do you think would change for trans children if reality and competition shows routinely included trans contestants, guests, and hosts?
- Speaking about the show *Transparent*, Tre’Vell Anderson says, “If you’re going to choose to insert yourself in the telling of a particular community story, or you want to help a particular community tell their story, you need to realize the privileges that you have, and you need to realize that life for them is different.” What does *Transparent* illustrate about the pitfalls of telling someone else’s story, even when the telling is commercially successful?



Executive Producer Laverne Cox (left) and Director Sam Feder



# MEDIA ETHICS

- Laverne Cox comments on the personal cost of the violent storylines in which trans people are raped, murdered, or beaten: “I want to cry talking about this narrative because it's just horrible. This is what happens to us, this is what happens when we watch. And I think that, I wonder if anyone when they were constructing these storylines thought about the trans people watching.”
  - What’s the impact when most of the depictions you see of people like you are as victims (or perpetrators) of violent crime?
  - How would you balance the benefits of informing the public about the real violence that trans people—especially trans women of color—are subjected to and the negative impacts on trans people of continually repeating such stories?
  - In your view, do media studios and distributors have any responsibility to present more varied storylines? Why or why not?
- Laverne Cox asks of *Boys Don’t Cry*, “Why is this the kind of story that gets told over and over again?” How would you answer that question? Why would studios be more comfortable with trans storylines that are tragic than storylines that are celebratory or depict an ordinary “slice of life”?
- Laverne Cox says, “Seeing trans people loved, uplifted, and well-regarded in film and television can endear you to step in when you see a trans person being harassed on the street, and to make sure the trans people in your life are supported in ways that affirm their humanity. But when all you see reinforces violence, we're put further in harm's way.” As Cox explains, the impact of media is cumulative. Do you think creatives have an obligation to look at their work in the context of the representations that are commonly portrayed?
- After hearing Zeke Smith's story about *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, would you let kids watch this film today? Should it start with a disclaimer? Would you want it pulled from broadcasts or streaming services? Why or why not? How do you think media studios, distributors, streaming services, or broadcasters should deal with films from the past that include negative stereotypes of transgender people?
- Marquise Vilsón says, “You see a film like *Paris Is Burning* and then suddenly here's Madonna's “Vogue.” And then people think Madonna, created Vogue.” What’s the difference between showing respect to a culture by sharing it and co-opting that culture. Can a celebrity who was neither trans nor Black share voguing while also honor its origins? What might that look like?
- When Candis Cayne gathered friends for a watch party to celebrate her first episode of *Dirty, Sexy Money* only to discover that the show had lowered her voice two octaves, she described the experience as “the most horrifying thing ever.” What made that particular special effect so horrifying?
- Faced with a choice between no work and playing a character that demeans or distorts trans lives, several actors in the film chose to play roles that included objectionable content. What would you do to fix the structures that create this untenable situation?

# CULTURE WARS

- A “culture war” refers to cultural conflict between social groups around their values, beliefs, and practices. How would you answer Susan Stryker’s question: “Why is it that trans issues have become a front and center issue in the culture wars?”
- Why is it that the conversation about trans people became narrowly focused on trans people’s access to bathrooms? Who raises this issue and why? In what ways does this framing of trans people being able to live and participate in public life (but only in reference to using restrooms) detract from a full dialogue on equality? How are the fears that lead to restrictive policies grounded in sexism and homophobia? Who is harmed and who benefits from restricting transgender people’s access to toilets?



# CHANGE

- Laverne Cox shares, “I never thought I'd live in a world where trans people would be celebrated on or off the screen... I never thought the media would stop asking horrible questions...and start treating us with respect.” What do you think has made that change possible?
- Susan Stryker says, “There is still a lot of work to do. And we can't think that just because you see trans representation, that the revolution is over... Having positive representation can only succeed in changing the conditions of life for trans people when it is part of a much broader movement for social change. Changing representation is not the goal, it's just a means to an end.” How is increased representation evidence that change has occurred? What changes still need to happen?
- Katie Couric says she wants to use her initial interview with Laverne Cox and Carmen Carrera as a “teachable moment, not only for myself, but how do we explain sort of what is the appropriate conversation and how do we make people feel if we don't have an example of what you shouldn't do?” What have you learned from **DISCLOSURE** that could help you answer those questions?
- Les Feinberg shares, “For all our lives, we've always... seen ourselves refracted through other people's prisms. We've always heard people analyze us, describe what our feelings are, what our thoughts are. How about talking about why Jesse Helms needs some therapy?” Knowing that Jesse Helms was a powerful, long-serving US Senator known for his vocal opposition to civil and gay rights, what is powerful about Feinberg's proposed shift in focus?
- Les Feinberg says, “If you don't name an oppression, you can't fight it, basically you can't organize around it...” Do you believe this to be true? How does **DISCLOSURE** support this idea? What role do media play in providing language? How does the sort of naming that mainstream media do limit or support struggles against oppression?
- The film notes that the revolt at Stonewall, which drew national attention to abuse of LGBTQ people and accelerated the gay rights movement, was sparked by transgender women, but some gay leaders rejected trans rights as beyond their agenda. As Yance Ford explains, “Assimilation is the American narrative and trans people make it really difficult for some people in the queer community to assimilate. And so what happens? That section of the queer community is like, you don't exist.” What are the benefits and drawbacks of social change movements based on making the case that “we're just like everyone else, so we deserve to be treated like everyone else.” Have you seen any similar patterns in other social change movements?
- Laverne Cox says, “You always have to be really skeptical when a few people are elevated and the majority of people are still struggling.” Why do you think that is? In terms of achieving social justice, why is it a problem to laud a few heroes or celebrities and ignore everyone else?
- Chase Strangio says that if people in power aren't pushing for actual material redistribution, then “all we're doing is elevating some people into the sphere of the powerful and not in any way, working to disrupt the systems that exclude most trans people from material survival.” Do you think that trans celebrities, creatives, or leaders have an obligation to help others succeed? Would they still have that obligation if there was no discrimination against transgender people?
- What was your reaction to the father who describes having a transgender child as, “You are living with an amazing human being. To be next to someone so brave, so cool, so close to themselves”? What role do parents and families play in achieving social justice for transgender people?

# CHANGE

- Jen Richards wonders why her own friends and family couldn't have been as supportive as the father who describes his transgender child, but mostly, holds herself accountable:
  - "The person who's most responsible for failing to have that kind of vision is me. I have never seen myself the way that father saw his own child. I've never seen myself that way. I never looked at myself with the kind of love and respect and awe that that father had for his own child. No one has looked at me that way. How could I look at me that way?"

Discuss Richard's reaction in the context of Yance Ford's comments about being what we cannot see (next bullet).

- Yance Ford says, "Marian Wright Edelman said, children cannot be what they cannot see. And it's not just about children. It's about all of us. We cannot be a better society until we see that better society. I cannot be in the world until I see that I am in the world." How does "seeing," especially seeing in media, empower us to be and create a more inclusive world?
- Laverne Cox says, "...so folks can evolve. And I think that a moment shifts and awareness shifts." In what ways has **DISCLOSURE** shifted your awareness?

# CLOSING QUESTIONS

These are designed to help synthesize the discussion and shift to action-planning.

- What's one thing you learned from **DISCLOSURE** that you wish everybody knew? What would change if everyone knew it?
- This film is important because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am inspired by this film (or discussion) to \_\_\_\_\_.
- If you could require one person (or one group) to view this film, who would it be? What do you hope their main takeaway would be?

“

**"DISCLOSURE** on Netflix is generous and sharp and loving and should be required viewing for ALL. I'm grateful for the continued education, and for the courage of everyone who made it, including a lot of my good friends and personal heroes."



**JAY DUPLASS**  
Actor, Producer

# TAKING ACTION

Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations have been difficult. Unless your screening is organized for the explicit purpose of helping a particular project or addressing a specific local issue, you'll probably want to spend some time brainstorming possibilities. If the group has trouble getting started, you might suggest one or two of these ideas:

- Challenge the group to think about ways they could respond to Laverne Cox's call to action: "I wonder if people who watch and love these shows, I wonder if they will reach out to trans people in need and work to defeat policies that scapegoat us, policies that discriminate against us, policies that dehumanize us. Because until that happens, all that energy from the silver screen won't be enough to better the lives of trans people off the screen."
- Brainstorm a list of daily routines you could adopt to support trans people in your life or community. For example, use a trans person's correct name and pronoun.
- Convene a book or video club to read/watch works that showcase trans lives in positive ways. Think proactively about ways to involve people who aren't already part of the proverbial "choir."
- Share and amplify online and real-world venues for trans people in your community to share their experiences with the public—and not only about trans issues. Consider that trans people are living in society and have unique perspectives to share on many facets of life.

Note that actions are most powerful when they address local circumstances and advocacy efforts, and when they are generated by the people at your screening in coordination with the people who will be most impacted (the "nothing about us without us" approach). Be sure you know about existing local initiatives, so you can inform participants and also so you don't duplicate efforts.



*Nick Adams*



*Alexandra Grey*



*Ser Anzoategui*



*Trace Lysette*

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Cis/Cisgender

A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," referring to people whose gender identity matches their sex assignment at birth. It is an antonym of "trans-." A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say "non-transgender people."

### Counter-reading

A counter-reading is the interpretation of a media source that diverges from the dominant or common interpretation. It's what allows members of marginalized communities, like trans people, to apply the lens of their own experience to classic/traditional narratives and read themselves into media in ways that majority audiences typically miss.

### Crossdresser

By definition, to crossdress is to wear clothes affiliated with those of the opposite sex. Thus, while anyone of any gender may by definition "crossdress," the term "crossdresser" is typically used to refer to cis men who occasionally wear clothes, makeup, and accessories culturally associated with women for the purposes of comfort, self-expression, sexual gratification, or fetish. In this context, these men often though not always identify as heterosexual. It is important to note that crossdressers are not transgender because while they may be wearing clothes that transgress gender norms, they maintain a cis gender identity and do not wish to actually live as their dressed sex full time. Crossdressing in this way is also different from drag culture/performance in that crossdressing is an expression of personal identity and experience rather than one for communal or entertainment purposes.

### Drag Queen

A drag queen is a person, usually a man, who uses clothing and makeup to perform exaggerated traditional feminine gender signifiers and roles. People participate in drag for a variety of reasons, from self-expression to performance. Drag performance was adopted by the LGBTQ community in the early 1900s as a way for gay men to express themselves and feel accepted in their community, and it has since evolved into an activity for all members of the queer community to explore their individual identities and challenge gender norms. Stereotypically drag queens have been gay cisgender men, but people of all sexual orientations and gender identities participate in drag: trans women, trans men, cis women, and nonbinary people are found in drag culture and may prefer titles other than drag queen, such as trans queen, or drag king.

In understanding that people of all identities participate in drag, it is important not to make assumptions about a performer's identity: to remember, for example, that not all drag queens are trans women, and vice versa. Drag queens often identify their drag persona with pronouns and titles that are different than those they use when not in drag. Additionally, while drag queens by definition are usually crossdressing, most prefer the term drag queen over crossdresser, as the former connects the practice to drag as a pillar of queer cultural significance, and the latter is simply a dictionary term.

## Gender Dysphoria

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association released the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) which replaced the outdated entry "Gender Identity Disorder" with "Gender Dysphoria," and changed the criteria for diagnosis. The necessity of a psychiatric diagnosis remains controversial, as both psychiatric and medical authorities recommend individualized medical treatment through hormones and/or surgeries to treat gender dysphoria. Some transgender advocates believe the inclusion of Gender Dysphoria in the DSM is necessary in order to advocate for health insurance that covers the medically necessary treatment recommended for transgender people.

## Gender Expression

External manifestations of gender, expressed through a person's name, pronoun, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, and/or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine or feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to align their gender expression with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Gender Identity

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit into one of those two choices (see nonbinary and/or genderqueer below.) Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

## Gender Identity Disorder (GID)

*Outdated, see Gender Dysphoria*

## Nonbinary and/or Genderqueer

Terms used by some people who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman. They may define their gender as falling somewhere in between man and woman, or they may define it as wholly different from these terms. The term is not a synonym for "transgender" or "transsexual" and should only be used if someone self-identifies as nonbinary and/or genderqueer.

## Gender Nonconforming

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. It may or may not apply to transgender people. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender nonconforming and vice versa. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. The term should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender nonconforming.

## Intersectionality

A term coined by American lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. It is used to help marginalized groups identify and understand their common struggles, e.g., the intersections between transphobia and other forms of discrimination (racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, etc.).

## Othering

Othering is a phenomenon in which individuals or groups are labeled/defined as not fitting in with a perceived normative social group: the practice of deliberately or ignorantly using language and action to show an "us vs. them" mentality to create division between a perceived majority and the group being "othered."

## **Sex**

The classification of a person as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. (This is what is written on the birth certificate.) A person's sex, however, is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

### **Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)**

Also called Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS). Refers to doctor-supervised surgical interventions, and is one small part of transition (see transition above). The phrase "sex change operation" is thought to be outdated for many people, however as popular terms change often, some people may still use this phrase to refer to their own Gender Confirmation Surgery. Do not refer to someone as being "pre-op" or "post-op." Not all transgender people choose to, or can afford to, undergo medical surgeries. Journalists, scholars, and script writers should avoid overemphasizing the role of surgeries in the transition process.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman.

### **Trans (adj.)**

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.

### **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.

### **Transition**

Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition can include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one's family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person. Avoid the phrase "sex change."

### **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.



## TERMS TO AVOID

**Biological or real:** all people are biological. All people are real. Calling cisgender people “biological” or “real” men and women positions trans and gender-nonconforming people as somehow deceptive and/or not-biological and therefore fake. Use cisgender or non-trans instead.

**Normal:** calling cisgender people “normal” asserts that trans and gender-nonconforming people are not normal. Use cisgender or non-trans instead.

**Tranny:** while sometimes used within the TGNC community, this is still considered a slur by most and should be avoided.

**Transgendered or Transgender as a noun** (“a transgender,” “transgenders,” etc.): transgender is an adjective and should be used as a descriptor people, i.e., a transgender person or transgender woman.

**Transvestite:** while some people identify as transvestites (largely in countries outside the US), this term is largely outdated and should be avoided.

## BEST PRACTICES REGARDING PRONOUNS

### **Always use a transgender person's name, whether or not it corresponds to legal documents.**

If someone tells you their name is Bill, you're not going to go out of your way to call them William just because that's what's on their state ID. Many transgender people are able to obtain a legal name change from a court. However, some transgender people face barriers to legal name changes or simply don't want to change their name on legal documents. They should be afforded the same respect for their name as anyone else who uses a name other than their birth name (e.g., celebrities).

### **Ask, don't assume.**

It's best practice to ask pronouns of everyone to assure that you will only be referring to people as they want to be referred. Offer your own first to get the ball rolling. Simply say, “I use he/him/his pronouns. What pronouns do you use?”

### **Some people use the singular pronouns they/them/their/theirs.**

This is more recently widely accepted by style guides as grammatically correct. For example: “Chris excelled in their position, so the company gave them a promotion. They begin their new role next week.”

### **If it is not possible to ask someone which pronoun they use, use the pronoun that is consistent with the person's appearance and gender expression or use the singular they.**

For example, if a person wears a dress and uses the name Susan, she/her/hers pronouns are usually appropriate. Or it is also acceptable to use the singular they to describe someone when you don't wish to assign a gender. For example: “Every individual should be able to express their gender in a way that is comfortable for them.”

# PEOPLE APPEARING IN DISCLOSURE

Conversations with actors, producers, directors, writers, and activists have been invaluable to this project. Here are some of the people who shared their stories with us. Many of them appear in the clips you'll be screening. This list can serve as a reference so that during the discussion you can help participants refer to people by name.



**Nick Adams** is the Director of Transgender Media & Representation at GLAAD. He is a resource for Hollywood creatives writing stories about transgender people.



**Tre'vell Anderson** is an award-winning journalist and social curator. They recently served as Director of Culture and Entertainment at *Out* magazine and culture critic at the *Los Angeles Times*. Tre'vell is currently Editor-At-Large for Toronto's *Xtra* and co-host of the Maximum Fun podcast, *FANTI*.



**Ser Anzoategui** is an actor known for their role on the Starz drama *Vida*. They are an advocate for more nonbinary representation in Hollywood.



**Alexandra Billings** is an actress, teacher, singer, and activist. She has appeared on *Transparent*, *Eli Stone*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, and *Grey's Anatomy*, among many credits. She is Assistant Professor of Acting at USC.



**Chaz Bono** is a writer, musician, and actor. He had a recurring role in *American Horror Story*, danced on ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*, and produced the Emmy-nominated documentary film, *Becoming Chaz*.



**Sandra Caldwell** is an actress and writer. She has been in over forty films, television shows, musicals, and plays. She's performed at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, played a small part in Maya Angelou's *Down in the Delta*, and had a role in the BET mini-series *The Book of Negroes*, as well as *Murder at 1600*, *Serendipity*, *Shall We Dance*, *The Cheetah Girls*, and *Charm*.



**Candis Cayne** is an actress. She had a recurring role as Carmelita in *Dirty Sexy Money*. She has appeared in TV and films such as *The Magicians*, *Wigstock: The Movie*, *Stonewall*, *Drag Time*, *Crazy Bitches*, and on the reality television show *I Am Cait*.



**Jamie Clayton** is an actress and model. She starred as Nomi Marks in the Netflix original series *Sense8*, and is featured in *The L Word: Generation Q*, *Designated Survivor*, and *Chain of Death*.



**Michael D. Cohen** is a Canadian actor. He is best known for his role as Schwoz Schwartz in *Henry Danger* and its spin-off, *The Adventures of Kid Danger*. He served as co-chair of the SAG-AFTRA Hollywood Conservatory at the American Film Institute, and is an acting coach.



**Laverne Cox** is a four-time Emmy-nominated actress, an Emmy-winning documentary film producer, and a prominent equal rights advocate and public speaker. Her groundbreaking role in the critically acclaimed Netflix original series *Orange Is the New Black* brought her to the attention of diverse audiences around the world.



**Jazzmun Nichala Crayton** is an actress. She has been working in film and television since the 1980s, appearing in over fifty roles including *The John Larroquette Show*, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Glee*.



**Elliot Fletcher** is an actor known for his roles in *Shameless*, *The Fosters*, *Faking It*, and *Young Hollywood*.



**Yance Ford** is an Oscar-nominated, Emmy-winning director and producer. His debut film, *Strong Island*, was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 90th Academy Awards. Ford is a former Series Producer at the PBS documentary series *POV*. His curatorial work there was recognized with 5 Emmy Awards and 16 Emmy nominations.



**Alexandra Grey** is an actress and musician. She is best known for her role as Melody Barnes in the Fox television series *Empire*. She also had recurring roles on Amazon's *Transparent* and *Chicago Med*. Grey stars as Lucy Hicks Anderson in the HBO Max miniseries *Equal*. In February 2021, *Deadline Hollywood* announced that Grey had joined the cast of the CBS action series *MacGyver*.



**Zackary Drucker** is an Emmy-nominated producer for the docu-series *This Is Me*, as well as a Producer on Golden Globe and Emmy-winning *Transparent*. She starred in the short experimental documentary *Framing Agnes*, which is being made into a feature film.



**Bianca Leigh** is an actress, singer, writer, and educator. She is best known for her roles in *Transamerica*, *Hurricane Bianca*, and *Redirecting Eddie*.



**Trace Lysette** is an actress. She has appeared in several television shows and films including *Hustlers*, *Transparent*, *Pose*, *Drunk History*, and *Blunt Talk*.



**Mickey R. Mahoney** is a media maker, educator, and performer. Mahoney teaches at the Art Institute of Chicago, and in the Television Department at Columbia College Chicago.



**Tiq Milan** writes about pop culture, inclusive leadership, transgender rights, and equity. A journalist for over a decade, his work has appeared on MIC, BuzzFeed, NBC, and CNN, among others.



**Jen Richards** is a writer, actress, producer, and advocate. She had a recurring role in the HBO series *Mrs. Fletcher*, and appeared in the 2019 mini-series *Tales of the City*, *I Am Cait*, *Nashville*, *Doubt* and many more. In 2016, Jen co-directed, co-wrote, and co-produced the web series *Her Story*, which was nominated for an Emmy Award.



**Mj Rodriguez** is an actress and singer. She is known for her role as Bianca Rodriguez-Evangelista in the television drama *Pose*. She also appeared in roles on television series such as *Nurse Jackie*, *The Carrie Diaries*, and *Luke Cage*. Mj is a beauty ambassador for Olay.



**Angelica Ross** is an entrepreneur, actress, and advocate. She is the CEO of TransTech Social Enterprises, a firm that helps employ transgender people in the tech industry. She appeared in the television drama *Pose*, and has a recurring role in the current season of *American Horror Story*.



**Hailie Sahar** plays Lulu Abundance in the television drama *Pose*, and starred in the off-Broadway production of *Charm* in 2017.



**Leo Sheng** is an activist, public speaker, writer, and artist. He appeared in the feature film *Adam*, and has a recurring role in *The L Word: Generation Q*.



**Brian Michael Smith** is an actor. He is in the cast of *9-1-1 Lonestar*, *The L Word: Generation Q*, and has appeared in *Queen Sugar*, *Chicago P.D.*, *Girls*, and *Homeland*.



**Zeke Smith** is a writer and advocate. In 2017, he participated as a contestant on *Survivor*, where he was outed as transgender by another cast member. Since then, Zeke has worked with GLAAD and helps raise awareness about transgender representation.



**Chase Strangio** is a lawyer and transgender rights activist. He is a staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union.



**Susan Stryker** is a Professor of Gender and Women's Studies, former director of the Institute for LGBT Studies, and founder of the Transgender Studies Initiative at the University of Arizona, and is currently the Barbara Lee Distinguished Chair in Women's Leadership at Mills College. She won an Emmy Award for the documentary film *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*.



**Rain Valdez** is an Emmy-nominated actress and award-winning filmmaker. She has appeared in TV Land's *Lopez* and in *Transparent*. She wrote and stars in the seven-part web series *Razor Tongue*. Her rom-com short *Ryans*, which she stars in and co-created with Natalie Heltzel, screened in dozens of film festivals worldwide.



**Marquise Vilsón** is an actor and activist. He acted in a critically acclaimed episode of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* which addressed the issues faced by transgender military service members. He has also acted in *Ben is Back*, *The Kitchen*, *The Blacklist*, and *Tales of the City*.



**Lilly Wachowski** is a writer, producer, and director. She is co-creator of *The Matrix* film franchise, *V for Vendetta*, *Speed Racer*, *Cloud Atlas*, and the Netflix series *Sense8*. She is a writer and executive producer for the current Showtime series *Work in Progress*.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

Below are select resources available for the US. Our [toolkits](#) contain a more comprehensive list.

For a full list of DISCLOSURE's partner organizations and international resources, go to [disclosurethemovie.com/resources](https://disclosurethemovie.com/resources).

## Media Initiatives and Media Literacy Resources

[Color of Change's #ChangeHollywood Initiative](#) collaborates with like-minded insiders and influencers to change representations of black people—and issues affecting black people—across the media landscape.

The [GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index \(SRI\)](#) maps the quantity, quality and diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) characters in films released by eight major motion picture studios during the 2019 calendar year. The report is intended to serve as a road map toward increasing fair, accurate and inclusive LGBTQ representation in film.

[GLAAD's Media Reference Guide](#) provides basic tips for writing fair and accurate stories about transgender people.

The [GLAAD Where We Are on TV](#) report analyzes the overall diversity of primetime scripted series regulars on broadcast networks and looks at the number of LGBTQ characters on cable networks and streaming services for the 2019-2020 TV season.

[Let's Breakthrough](#) harnesses the power of media and popular culture to spark conversations and transform norms around gender, racial justice, sexuality, and immigrant rights.

[NAMLE](#) is the leading nonprofit membership organization dedicated to advancing media literacy education in the United States with resources about learning how to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication.

## Advocacy Organizations

[Transgender Law Center \(TLC\)](#) is the largest national trans-led organization advocating for a world in which all people are free to define themselves and their futures. Grounded in legal expertise and committed to racial justice, TLC employs a variety of community-driven strategies to keep transgender and gender nonconforming people alive, thriving, and fighting for liberation.

[Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund](#) is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, and public policy efforts.

The [Trans Justice Funding Project](#) is a community-led funding initiative founded in 2012 to support grassroots, trans justice groups run by and for trans people in the United States, including U.S. territories. They make grants annually by bringing together a panel of six trans justice activists from around the country to carefully review every application they receive.

[The Trevor Project](#) is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning youth.

[Lambda Legal](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

**National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects** works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within LGBTQ communities. The organization is a national coalition of local member programs, affiliate organizations and individual affiliates who create systemic and social change. Their members strive to increase power, safety and resources through data analysis, policy advocacy, education and technical assistance. National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects produce two annual national reports on LGBTQ Hate Violence and LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence, the only national reports of their kind.

**The National Center for Transgender Equality** advocates to change policies and society to increase understanding and acceptance of transgender people. In the nation's capital and throughout the country, NCTE works to replace disrespect, discrimination, and violence with empathy, opportunity, and justice.

**Immigration Equality** works to secure safe haven, freedom to live openly, and equality for individuals and families in our community. Through direct legal services, policy advocacy, and impact litigation, we advocate for immigrants and families facing discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status.

## **Support and Community Orgs**

**G.L.I.T.S. (Gays and Lesbians Living in a Transgender Society)** creates holistic solutions to the health and housing crises faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals experiencing systemic discrimination at intersecting oppressions impacted by racism and criminalization, through a lens of harm reduction, human rights principles, social justice and community empowerment, imbued with a commitment to empowerment and pride in finding solutions in our own community.

**GLSEN** works to ensure that LGBTQ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. They conduct extensive and original research to inform evidence-based solutions for K-12 education.

**GSA Network:** GSA clubs, or GSAs for short, are student-run organizations that unite LGBTQ+ and allied youth to build community and organize around issues impacting them in their schools and communities. GSAs have evolved beyond their traditional role to serve as safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth in middle schools and high schools, and have emerged as vehicles for deep social change related to racial, gender, and educational justice.

The **National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC)** has been America's leading national civil rights organization dedicated to the empowerment of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+, and same gender loving (LGBTQ+/SGL) people, including people living with HIV/AIDS through coalition building, federal policy change, research, and education.

**PFLAG** is the first and largest organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people, their parents and families, and allies. With over 400 chapters and 200,000 members and supporters crossing multiple generations of families in major urban centers, small cities, and rural areas across America, PFLAG is committed to creating a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected, valued, and affirmed.

**Rainbow Railroad** is global not-for-profit organization that helps LGBTQI+ people facing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. They've helped over 1,600 LGBTQI+ individuals find safety through emergency relocation and other forms of assistance.

**SAGE USA** leads in addressing issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) aging. In partnership with its constituents and allies, SAGE works to achieve a high quality of life for LGBT older people, supports and advocates for their rights, fosters a greater understanding of aging in all communities, and promotes positive images of LGBT life in later years.

The **Okra Project** is a collective that seeks to address the global crisis faced by Black Trans people by bringing home cooked, healthy, and culturally specific meals and resources to Black Trans People wherever we can reach them.

**Trans Lifeline** is a grassroots hotline and microgrants 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis – for the trans community, by the trans community.

**TransLash** builds narratives to advance trans stories, culture, histories, and healing, telling stories which advance understanding, knowledge and empathy by emphasizing personal narratives of courage, resilience and quiet bravery are what we are all about.

The **TransLatin@ Coalition (TLC)** was founded in 2009 by a group of Transgender and Gender nonconforming and Intersex (TGI) immigrant women in Los Angeles, California, as a grassroots response to address the specific needs of TGI Latin@ immigrants who live in the United States.

**TRUTH** is a youth-led program for trans and gender nonconforming young people to build public understanding, empathy, and a movement for liberation through storytelling and media organizing.



*L'ierre Ailith (left), Angelica Ross (middle), Schuron D. Womack (right)*

# DISCLOSURE TOOLKITS & DISCUSSION GUIDE

These toolkits have been assembled to help you engage in conversations that connect family, friends, classmates, colleagues, and communities. Take a look below, and see which one is right for your community. For additional resources, visit the DISCLOSURE website at: [disclosurethemovie.com/resources](https://disclosurethemovie.com/resources)

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

The discussion guide contains prompts for engaging in conversation after watching DISCLOSURE, and is designed to be used with the full film. It contains conversation starters, resources, and ways to take action.

## TOOLKIT FOR COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

This toolkit is designed to be used in higher education and with community groups. It contains approximately 36 minutes of clips. The toolkit contains: general discussion prompts, facilitation tips, thematic questions to go along with the clips, resources and ways to take action.

## TOOLKIT FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE EXPLORING GENDER IDENTITY

This toolkit is designed to be used with youth groups such as GSAs that encourage peer leadership and community. It may also be useful for adult-centered advocacy groups like PFLAG. It contains approximately 36 minutes of clips. The toolkit contains: general discussion prompts, facilitation tips, thematic questions to go along with the clips, resources and ways to take action.

## TOOLKIT FOR INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

This toolkit is designed to be used by film industry executives and creatives. It is designed to be supplemental to the full film. The toolkit contains information about: the state of the industry, questions to consider and discuss, analysis of helpful and harmful representation, frequently asked questions, and resources.

## TOOLKIT FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

This toolkit is designed to be used by lawyers, judges, and others working within the legal system. It contains approximately 36 minutes of clips. It contains approximately 30 minutes of clips. The toolkit contains: general discussion prompts, facilitation tips, thematic questions to go along with the clips, resources and ways to take action.

## TOOLKIT FOR DEI TRAININGS IN THE WORKPLACE

This toolkit is designed to be used by HR representatives, and others looking to lead DEI training in the workplace. It contains approximately 30 minutes of clips. The toolkit contains: general discussion prompts, facilitation tips, thematic questions to go along with the clips, resources and ways to take action.



In April 2021, Oprah Winfrey watched DISCLOSURE in preparation for her interview with Elliot Page. Learn more about her experience here.

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