

THIS ISSUE

- *Appropriate terms to use when referring to someone who is transgender*
- *A new brand of emergency contraceptive pill*

Inside This Issue:

Remembering Leelah Alcorn	1
Guide to appropriate vocab	2
A Path Appears documentary	2
Team Member Spotlight	3

Remembering Leelah Alcorn

In recent weeks, you have probably heard about the death of a transgender teen just north of Cincinnati. You have also probably heard her called two different names (and gender pronouns) depending on the news source you are listening to. Leelah Alcorn was a transgendered teen girl who was born Joshua Alcorn. She was a talented artist and musician. She identified as female, but to her peers at school she had come out as a gay boy. In the suicide note that was set to publish online a couple of hours after she stepped in front of a tractor trailer on I-71, she wrote about the psychiatrists and religious counseling her parents sent her to (commonly called conversion or reparative therapy), their insistence that she would “never truly be a girl, that God doesn’t make mistakes, and that I’m wrong.”¹ In statements released by her parents in reaction to her death, they said things like “we don’t support that, religiously... we loved him no matter what. I loved my son. People need to know that. He was a good kid, a good boy¹.” Despite the fact that her suicide note clearly spelled out that she identified as a girl, her parents continued to insist on calling Leelah their son, and referring to her given name, Josh. In a facebook post after her death, Leelah’s mother insinuated that the teen had simply gone out for a walk and been hit by a truck, not that she had walked 4 miles from home and stepped onto the highway.

The outcry after her death reflected a truly negative opinion of her parents. The memorial service was moved due to threats of protest, there were rumors

that her best friend was not allowed to attend, and it was made clear in her suicide note that her parents had removed her access to her friends and other social media outlets. The type of reparative therapy they forced her to endure has been condemned by many. For example, Human Rights Campaign states the following: “Beyond studies focused solely on reparative therapy, broader research clearly demonstrates the significant harm that societal prejudice and family rejection has on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, particularly youth. Furthermore, there is significant anecdotal evidence of harm to LGBT people resulting from attempts to change their sexual orientation. Based on this body of evidence, every major medical and mental health organization in the United States has issued a statement condemning the use of reparative therapy.”² Beyond this, they list the specific positions of the American Medical Association, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American Psychiatric Association, among many others, all condemning the use of these types of therapy. After Leelah’s suicide, a petition was created on Change.org seeking to establish “Leelah’s Law” that would ban conversion/reparative therapies on a national level.

No matter your beliefs, Leelah’s suicide note makes it clear that she was living her life in pain. While being transgender is nothing new, it is something that society as a whole is only now coming to terms with. A survey study in 2010 showed that 41 percent of transgender people who responded had attempted suicide.³ While

trans people are now more frequently in the public eye than ever before, we still have a long way to go. Trans actress Laverne Cox of the popular show *Orange is the New Black* and the television show *Transparent* have garnered praise and awards this year. However, in a statement to the Boston Globe, journalist Parker Marie Molloy says, “Time [magazine] proclaimed that we’ve reached a ‘transgender tipping point’... Declaring a tipping point is great for raising trans awareness, but it makes it far too easy to ignore the struggles—such as health care discrimination, poverty, unemployment, and increased risk of becoming the victims of violent crimes⁴.” Cincinnati even became the first city in the Midwest to include trans-specific health care in benefits for city employees. But that probably doesn’t help a young woman learning who she is when her parents are telling her they don’t want her to be who she is. Leelah’s untimely death and subsequent suicide note catapulted her story all over the world. In her own words, “Gender needs to be taught about in schools, the earlier the better. My death needs to mean something. Fix society. Please.”



Gender/sexuality Vocabulary Guide

There are a lot of words out there that seek to define gender and sexuality. If we're going to talk about these topics, it needs to be done in a manner that is appropriate, sensitive, and uses the correct terminology. Here is a list of some terms we think you should be familiar with. Please be aware that this list is not comprehensive, and ultimately, only each individual person can identify their preferred gender and sexuality definition.

Sex: classification as male or female assigned at birth, usually male or female and usually based on the appearance of the external genitalia. Sex is actually based on things like internal and external reproductive organs, chromosomes, and bodily characteristics

Gender identity: a person's own, internally felt sense of gender. For the average person, this is either male or female, and usually "matches" the physical classification of male or female.

Gender expression: this is the expressed manifestation of one's gender. This manifests through choices such as one's name, pronouns used to describe you, the way you dress and cut your hair, and the bodily characteristics one has control over.

Sexual orientation: this is one's physical, emotional, and/or romantic attraction to another.

Transgender: this is an overarching term for someone whose gender identity and/or gender expression is different from what is usually associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Hormonal therapies can be prescribed, and surgeries can be performed if the person would like to take the steps to make a physical transition to a different gender (or to make their physical sex match their gender identity/expression).

Transsexual: this is not an umbrella term in the way that transgender is, but rather is a more outdated term used to describe someone who has permanently changed (or is seeking to change) their body.

Transgender man: Those who are labeled as female at birth but identify and live life as a man. Can be shortened to trans man, but some people just prefer to be identified as men. This is up to the individual, and you should ask what he prefers! Generally, the pronoun used to refer to a trans man is "he" unless the individual prefers otherwise.

Transgender woman: Those who are labeled as male at birth but identify and live life as a woman. Can be shortened to trans woman, but some people just prefer to be identified as women. This is up to the individual, and you should ask what she prefers! Generally, the pronoun used to refer to a trans woman is "she" unless the individual prefers otherwise.

NOTE that transgender people may be straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted to only to men would be considered a straight woman

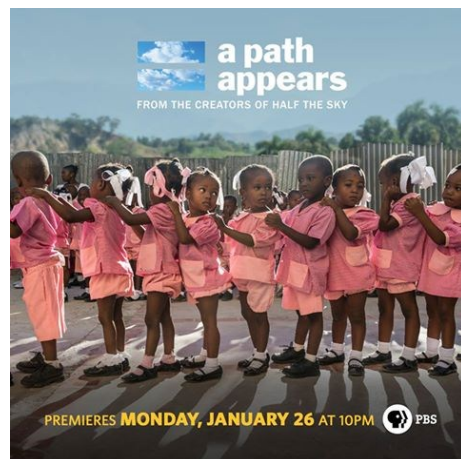
Cross-dresser: this word has replaced the term "transvestite" in common vernacular. This a term used to describe heterosexual men who occasionally wear clothing and makeup usually associated with women, and is a form of gender expression. Cross dressers do not want to permanently change their sex nor live life full time as a woman. (Transgender women are NOT crossdressers, nor are they drag queens. Drag queen is a term used to describe homosexual men who occasionally dress as women for entertainment purposes.)

Cisgender: A term used to describe people who are not transgender.

There are a lot of other terms out there that we don't have room for in the newsletter, but we thought you should be aware of a few basic words are appropriate to use. All of these definitions are adapted from the list on the GLAAD Media reference guide⁵, and there are even more terms listed there. The link is listed in the References section of the newsletter!

If you are interested in learning more about international and domestic efforts to impact the rights of women and girls, you may want to watch a new three part documentary series that premiered on PBS on January 26th (but will be repeated in the coming weeks). The first episode is available online, with the next installments airing on February 2nd and 9th. The creators started the Half the Sky Movement (referring to women "holding up" half the sky as they comprise half of the world's population) which gained traction in recent years. They turned this project into a documentary called *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* which showed women and girls in incredibly difficult situations around the world, and their efforts to change their own circumstances.

From the same creators comes a new documentary called *A Path Appears*. While *Half the Sky* focused more on international situations in ten countries, *A Path Appears* focuses on stories within the US and only three other countries, utilizing personal stories to illustrate broader topics. The three episodes are called 'Sex Trafficking in the USA,' 'Breaking the Cycle of Poverty,' and 'Violence and Solutions.' There are a number of actors who are also advocates for the various causes addressed in the film, and they are working to "uncover the harshest forms of gender inequality, the devastating impact of poverty and the ripple effects that follow: including sex trafficking, teen-pregnancy, gender-based violence, child slavery and the effective solutions being forged to combat them⁶." The film further addresses the systemic impact and roots of these issues, while demonstrating proven ways to change them.



**Aftera:
A new emergency contraceptive pill**

We found a new brand of emergency contraception! Aftera is manufactured by Gedeon Richter, which is based out of Budapest, Hungary. We are still trying to track down more information about this seemingly new product (we can't even find it on Google!) to see if it would be worthwhile for our clients. In the meantime, it is available at CVS. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) released a statement earlier this summer regarding the efficacy of Levonogestrel utilized as an emergency contraceptive (morning after) pill. There was concern that these pills would not be as effective for women who were over a certain weight, but this statement says otherwise:

"7/28/2014— Budapest. Gedeon Richter Plc. - as one of the leading companies developing and marketing gynaecological products worldwide, including emergency contraceptives and oral contraceptives – welcomes the EMA's positive opinion on the effectiveness of emergency contraceptives, based on available data. This means that Levonogestrel (LNG) originally developed by Gedeon Richter Plc. for the emergency contraception for all women. The EMA underlines in its statement that emergency contraceptives can continue to be taken after unprotected intercourse, regardless of bodyweight, but women should be reminded that emergency contraception is an occasional "rescue" method, which does not work as well as a regular method of contraception, such as the pill."

We will be looking in to buying this new pill, but will continue to keep Plan B in stock.



MEN'S HEALTH

Interested in the Men's Health Initiative for your organization? Contact the program coordinator: eric.washington@cincinnati-oh.gov

**TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
EL SHADDAI, RN**

Name: El-Shaddai Piri

Hometown: Huntsville Alabama

Favorite movie: My favorite movie is *Set It Off* and *The Notebook*, I enjoy the story of both movies

What do you do at the body shop? I am a Registered Nurse.

What do you love about working in reproductive health? I love the fact that I can meet so many new women and in some way impact or influence them to take control of their health.

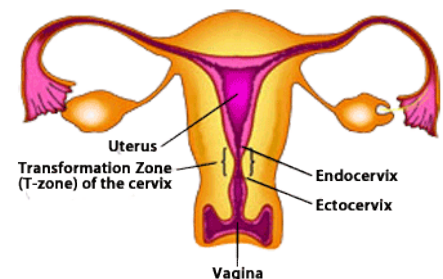
When you're not at the body shop, where might we find you? Enjoying time with family. I have 4 children, Tyrell (11), Amaya and Brad (9) and Eli (1.5) with another on the way that is due in May!



The newsletter took a little hiatus for the month of January, but we can't forget to remind you that January was Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. The best way to detect early indicators of cervical cancer is to have a Pap test as often as is recommended by your provider. Cervical cancer is fairly slow to develop, and because of this is also extremely preventable if you get tests when you should. This form of cancer is almost always caused by some form of HPV, or human papilloma virus. This can be stigmatizing considering HPV is generally sexually transmitted, but it is so important to remember that by 50 years old, around 80% of women (and men) will have had some form of HPV! Most times (80-90% of the time) the virus clears itself, but sometimes it doesn't. In addition, over 70% of cases are identified as HPV-16 or HPV-18,

two high risk types of the virus⁷. Luckily, there is a vaccine that young women and men can get called Gardasil that will protect against some of the 100 different types of HPV, including these two high risk types.

The most common area of the cervix for cancerous cells to develop is in the Transformative Zone in between the Ectocervix and Endocervix on the diagram below.



The Men's Health Initiative performs health education seminars at local community-based organizations. We currently have seminars on the following topics:

- Reproductive Anatomy, Pregnancy, and Sexuality**
- STIs and Protecting Yourself**
- Relationships and Communication**
- Family Planning**
- Fatherhood**
- Puberty**
- Bullying**

thebodyshop

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM

Reproductive Health Suite
Clement Health Center
Cincinnati Health Department
3101 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45229

RHWP Hotline:
513-357-7341

Appointment scheduling through the CHD Call Center:
513-357-7320



The Reproductive Health and Wellness Program (RWHP) or the body shop, is a five-year grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Health to the Cincinnati Health Department and is funded by the federal Title X program. The primary objective of this program is to provide access to contraceptives and reproductive health services to the men and women of Hamilton County, especially to the most underserved populations, so as to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, and ultimately, the number of poor pregnancy outcomes. Through these direct services, education and outreach, the program also hopes to cultivate a culture of responsibility, well-being, and empowerment in regards to sexuality and reproductive health. To date, we've enrolled nearly 6,000 individuals, and continue to grow, learn, and serve.

For additional information regarding the project, please contact Dr. Jennifer Mooney at:

jennifer.mooney@cincinnati-oh.gov

We borrowed this month's reminder from Planned Parenthood because it's just so cute!
Don't forget, if you are due for your Pap test, schedule your appointment today!
And of course... always use a condom!

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