

ACTIVITY 5.1

My Resilience Journey: Exploring Supports and Barriers

Directions: In this activity, learners are given or take out a blank piece of paper. Then, learners draw a curvy line from the left side of the paper to the right. They should then draw an X on the left side of the line and write *Start*; then, they should draw an X on the right side of the line and write *Now*. Instructors should tell learners to imagine this line representing their life from birth to this moment of “now.” Each learner should take a moment to think about all of the people, experiences, and events in their respective lives that have helped them understand and feel good about their gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Students should then write these down along the line, and mark these with a plus (“+”) sign. This is their resilience.

Learners should then take a moment to think about all of the people, experiences, and events in their respective lives that were barriers or threats to feeling good about their gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Students should then write these down along the line, and mark these with a minus (“-”) sign. These are the threats to their resilience and represent social justice concerns. LGBTQ psychology instructors can then divide the class into dyads so the students may explore their own resilience journeys related to gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, as well as hear a different type of journey from their own. Specific processing questions for the dyads can include the following:

- What was your experience developing your resilience journey?
 - Did anything surprise you or challenge you about your resilience journey?
 - If a mental health professional was working with you at various points in your resilience journey, what interventions would have been helpful for him or her to use related to your gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation?
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