

Myer's Interview: Perspectives

As a transgender boy growing up in rural Maine, Alex Myers had to fight for visibility; today, he travels around the country educating students on the transgender community.

Myers came out as a man before his senior year of high school. "Society told me I was a girl. My parents told me I was a girl. I wasn't going to think that they were wrong, at the same time as I always felt I was or I wanted to be or I should be a boy," he said.

The next year, he became the first out transgender person to attend Harvard, where he helped rewrite the university nondiscrimination policy to include gender identity.

Now, Myers speaks at high schools and colleges around the country about his experiences. He also explored the concept of gender in his book "Revolutionary," which tells the story of one of his ancestors who disguised herself as a man to fight in the Revolutionary War.

Today, more Americans than ever before know someone who is transgender—a person whose gender identity does not match the one they were assigned at birth. A recent study by the Human Rights Campaign shows that 22 percent of Americans know or work with a transgender person, an uptick from 17 percent in a similar study last year.

The increasing visibility of transgender people is helping more and more Americans to accept the transgender community, Myers said.

"The real way you bring people together is by living in their communities, by being good citizens and by modeling who you are," he said

Warm up questions

1. What is gender?
2. What is the difference between sex and gender?
3. What does the word transgender mean?

Critical thinking questions

1. What does the word “gender” mean to you? What behaviors and expressions make up a person’s gender?
2. What are some of the difficulties facing people who are transgender?
3. In the video, Myers said that Hollywood currently “glamorizes” transgender people in a way that does not reflect the general transgender community. What does he mean? Do you agree? Why or why not? How do you think transgender characters affect public attitudes about transgender people?